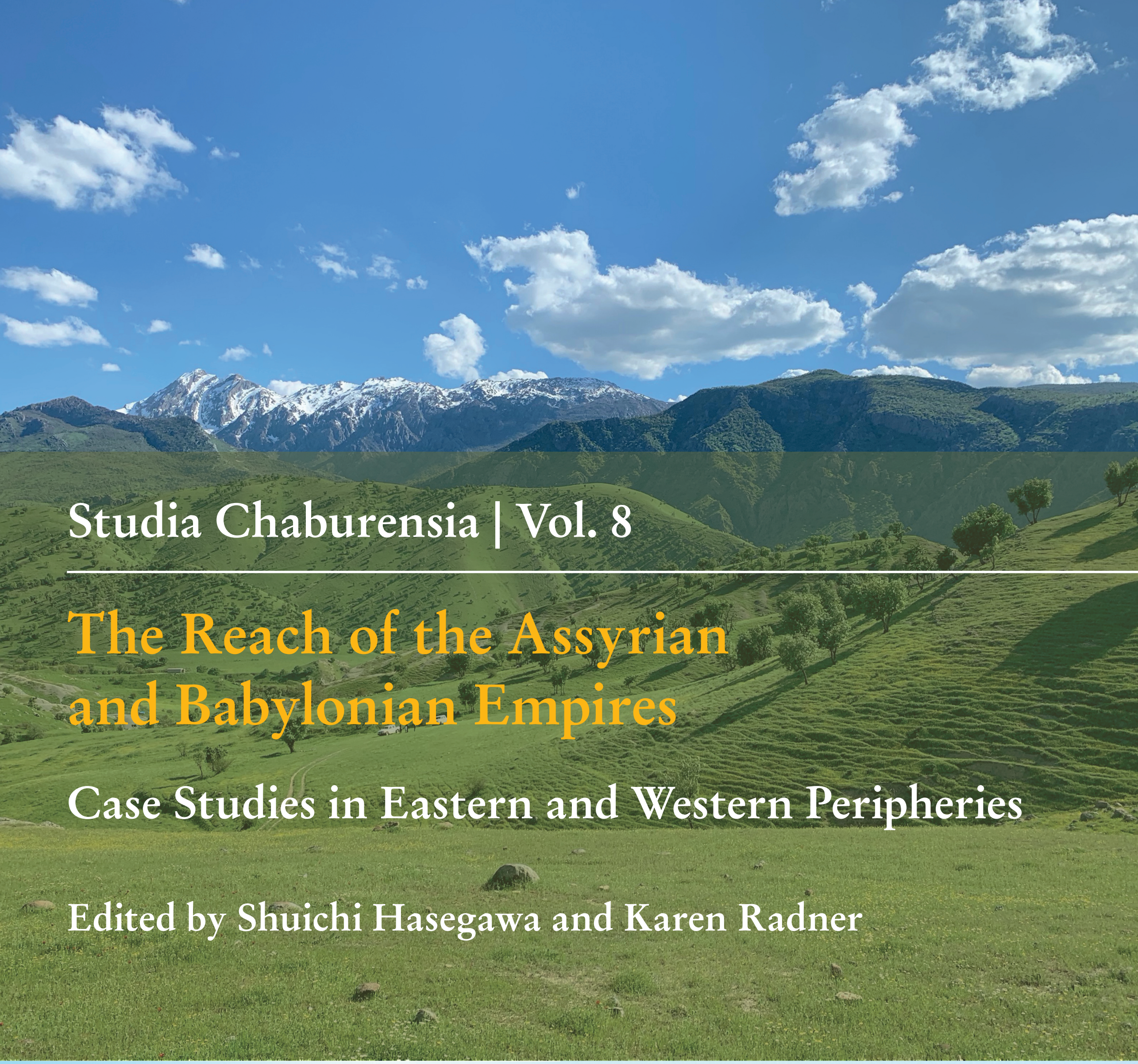

Studia Chaburensia | Vol. 8

The Reach of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires

Case Studies in Eastern and Western Peripheries

Edited by Shuichi Hasegawa and Karen Radner

Harrassowitz Verlag

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The Reach of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires

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Cover illustration:
Above: View from the Peshdar Plain north of Qaladze towards the Qandil mountains of the Zagros range (Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq, April 2019). Photo by Andrea Squitieri.
Below left: View of Qalat as-Sela (Jordan, October 2018). © Sela Archaeological Project, courtesy Rocío Da Riva.
Below right: View of Tel Rekhesh with Mount Tabor rising up in the background (Israel, August 2008). © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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Preface

Promoting Northern Mesopotamian studies of all periods, but with a focus on Assyria, is the aim of the book series *Studia Chaburensia*. Extending as far as Anatolia, Iran, and Egypt, the Assyrian Empire encompassed the entire Ancient Near East. Politically and militarily unrivalled it hegemonized the ancient world of the 7th century BC. Studying Assyrian history and culture therefore always implies the necessity of going beyond one's own nose to incorporate both local and regional aspects. A second significant feature of this empire is its long history of state formation under a single royal dynasty that continued for more than one thousand years and – in archaeological terms – over three cultural periods: the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, and the Iron Age. This long period also included the major material and socio-economic transition from bronze to iron.

Beginning in the 19th century, research on Assyria focused for more than a hundred years on the reading and understanding of the vast corpus of inscriptions, and on the interpretation of the archaeological context of their provenance, i.e. the Assyrian capital cities with their relief-decorated palaces and temples. However, the excavation of Assyrian provincial centers, villages, and even hamlets in the "home provinces" and in the Assyrian-dominated realm from the Levant to the Zagros Mountains during the last half-century has changed the general view of Assyrian history and culture. It is now possible to untangle the varieties of hegemony, administration, and material culture against a backdrop of different ethnic groups, regional cultural traditions, and languages.

This volume, edited by Shuichi Hasegawa and Karen Radner, is thus very welcome. Bridging the geographical extension of the Assyrian Empire, and addressing its still poorly-understood "continuity" with the short-lived Babylonian Empire, it offers an impressive collection of regional and methodical studies that employ a range of modern approaches to Assyrian and also Babylonian imperial history and culture. Furthermore it is a milestone for the series *Studia Chaburensia* as it is the first volume to be published in hybrid format, as a print publication and a digital Open Access publication, made possible thanks to the generous financial support provided by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation through the establishment of the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Ancient History of the Near and Middle East for Karen Radner at LMU Munich in 2015.

Hartmut Kühne
Berlin, August 2020

DOI: 10.13173/9783347114776_VII

SHUICHI HASEGAWA AND KAREN RADNER
Rikkyō University, Tokyo and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München

Introduction

Since the dawn of history, human beings have favoured lifestyles organised in groups. Hunting and gathering is more effectively organised when conducted as a group, and this is even more so with agriculture, which in the Ancient Near East required careful and labour-intensive management of water and triggered the emergence of village communities and eventually cities and states. With mass-scale agriculture enabling the growth of certain population groups, some of these groups began to dominate and assimilate smaller groups, and the resultant formation of territorial states entailed development of ever more complex societal structures. This volume is concerned with the early empires of the Ancient Near East of the first half of the first millennium BCE, within which multiple and diverse population groups cohabited and interacted. As John MacKenzie stated in his introduction to *The Encyclopedia of Empire*:

> "An empire is an expansionist polity which seeks to establish various forms of sovereignty over people or peoples of an ethnicity different from (or in some cases the same as) its own. It thus becomes a composite political unit with, generally, a ruling center and a dominated periphery."[1]

The first substantial empire in the ancient Near East congruent with the above definition was that of the kingdom of Assyria whose imperial phase can be said to begin with the political reconfigurations engineered under Ashurnasirpal II and in particular the move to the new capital city of Kalḫu in 879 BCE.[2] While its heartland is located in northern Iraq, the holdings of the Assyrian Empire, organised in provinces, came to encompass by the late 8th century BCE an unprecedentedly vast area from the Mediterranean coast in the west to the western Iranian plateau in the east, surrounded by client states as far away as in Cyprus, western Anatolia, the Nile Delta and Bahrain that accepted the sovereignty of the Assyrian monarch. The area of Assyrian control included geographically and climatically different regions, such as fertile plains, bleak wilderness, dense forests and imposing mountains, and diverse population groups from different cultural backgrounds dwelled under Assyrian hegemony. Hence, for the Assyrian monarchs and elites, it was imperative to devise and maintain effective mechanisms of control in order to ensure cohesion and domination of the extensive lands with their diverse people, including both sedentary and mobile groups. The strategies introduced by the Assyrian Empire were so effective that they outlived the state's collapse at the end of the 7th century BCE and were largely continued by the Babylonian Empire, which succeeded Assyria in the preeminent position of the Near East for about seventy years before the capture of Babylon in 539 BCE allowed Cyrus II of Persia, laying the foundations for a

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[1] MacKenzie 2016: lxxxiii. Note that the quoted sentences here are only the initial part of the longer definition.

[2] Radner 2011: 323-325.

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state that vastly exceeded its predecessors in size, complexity and the diversity of its populations: the Persian Empire.

This volume deals with the Assyrian and the Babylonian Empires and seeks to provide new data for the methods that enabled these states to govern efficaciously their vast territories and diverse populations. Since both states exerted and distributed power and authority from centre to periphery, the channels through which these were asserted are understood to be of key concern in order to assess the imperial structures. Elucidating the mechanisms of control, especially in view of the always fragile relations between the state centre and remote peripheries, has long been a major subject in the study of ancient empires.[3] This volume is specifically concerned with tracing the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires' reach into, and their hold over, their more peripheral regions. The papers collected in this volume cover the period from the 9th to the 6th centuries BCE and draw on the rich archaeological and textual data that has come to light in old and new excavations and survey projects in Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey.

The papers are a selection of the contributions that were supposed to be presented at a workshop entitled "Historical studies on the rule of provinces in the ancient Near Eastern Empires: Synthesising philological and archaeological studies" at Rikkyō University in Tokyo from 26–27 March 2020 where thirteen scholars from institutions in Germany, the UK, the US, and Japan were meant to come together in order to juxtapose modes of imperial control over two regions in particular: the southern Levant and Iraqi Kurdistan, which their distance from the imperial centres as well as the recent advances in field research make promising cases for comparative research. However, that meeting could not be realised due to the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant travel restrictions, as most of the scholars involved could not attend the workshop in person. Nevertheless, most participants kindly submitted their papers and / or presentations. On 26 March 2020, the two editors were joined by Shigeo Yamada for a very intimate version of the colloquium at Rikkyō University where we read and viewed also all other papers and presentations together; the fact that the workshop's participants were spread across very different time-zones prevented us from turning the workshop into a teleconference.

Consequently, the editors made the decision to work towards a more narrowly conceived publication that would focus only on the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires but include also other regional foci. All contributors were given access to each others' papers, resulting in some cases in fruitful exchange and the further development of specific arguments. We are very happy and grateful to publish here the resultant papers, which are a testimony to the resilience and determination of scholarly collaboration in the face of challenging circumstances.

Assisted by UAV data from the Peshdar Plain in Iraqi Kurdistan and machine learning techniques, **Mark Altaweel** suggests how better to identify relatively flat archaeological sites, as they are common in the imperial age of the first millennium BCE, and highlights the importance of such sites for the analysis of the internal spatial distribution of settlements. **Shuichi Hasegawa**, raising the possibility of ascribing the late Iron Age monumental building complex recently unearthed at Tel Rekhesh in the Lower Galilee to the time of the Babylonian Empire, discusses that state's policy in controlling the southern Levant. In presenting the results of the recent excavations and survey at Yasin Tepe in Iraqi Kurdistan, **Shin'ichi Nishiyama** demonstrates the significance of the site within the Assyrian Empire and discusses the Assyrian presence and cultural influence in the Shahrizor Plain, as reflected in Yasin Tepe's material culture. Based on a detailed analysis of the relevant cuneiform sources, **Jamie Novotny** draws attention to the lasting importance of the provincial centre of Ḫarrān (now located in southeastern Turkey near Şanlıurfa) to the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and discusses the various building projects sponsored there by their monarchs. **Karen Radner**, **Sheler Amelirad** and **Eghbal Azizi** present a first radiocarbon date for one of the three elite burials (Tomb A10) excavated at the Iron Age cemetery of Sanandaj (Kurdistan Province, Iran), which supports the previous attribution of the burial to the time of the Assyrian Empire when the Sanadaj region was part of the province of Parsua (established 744 BCE). By combining archaeological, geophysical, and visibility analyses, **Andrea Squitieri** discusses the defence strategies of the Assyrian Empire on the eastern frontier along the Lower Zab river, drawing primarily on archaeological and geospatial data from the excavations and surveys in the Peshdar Plain in Iraqi Kurdistan. **Hidetoshi Tsumoto** juxtaposes the results of the Ancient Orient Museum's excavations at two small archaeological sites in Syria, Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma, and discusses the markedly different effects on these sites of the territorial expansion of the Assyrian Empire, resulting in their incorporation in the 9th and in the 8th centuries BCE, respectively. Collecting all available epigraphic sources, **Yoko Watai** sketches the activities of the kings Nebuchadnezzar II and Nabonidus in the westernmost parts of the Babylonian Empire and examines the two monarchs' common and differing strategies in these regions. Finally, **Shigeo Yamada** discusses the conquest of the land of Zamua / Mazamua in the 9th century BCE and its reorganization as a key province in the eastern reaches of the Assyrian Empire.

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[3] See e.g., Rowlands et al. 1987; Alcock et al. 2001; Radner 2014; Liverani2017; Chase-Dunn and Hall 2018; Tyson and Herrmann 2018.

In addition to our contributors, we would like to thank Hartmut Kühne, the series editor of *Studia Chaburensia*, for his acceptance of this volume in the series and for his help in swiftly realising its publication, together with Barbara Krauß and her team at Harrassowitz Verlag. The workshop and the resultant publication were generously supported by a JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) (grant number 17H04527: "Historical studies on the rule of provinces in the ancient Near Eastern Empires: Synthesising Philological and Archaeological Studies; principal investigator: Shuichi Hasegawa). Our gratitude also extends at LMU Munich to Denise Bolton who patiently language-edited the volume and to Jens Rohde who carefully typeset it; their work was funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation through the establishment of the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Ancient History of the Near and Middle East for Karen Radner at LMU Munich in 2015. Finally, we are grateful to Rocío Da Riva (Universitat de Barcelona) for allowing us to use a striking image from Qalat as-Sela in Jordan in the cover image, there joining photographs from the editors' own field projects in Israel and Iraqi Kurdistan. The resultant composite image is ideally suited to introduce the reader to the wide reach of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires and the beautiful and heterogeneous landscapes of their eastern and western peripheries.

The following map (Fig. 1) illustrates the archaeological sites that are discussed in this volume.

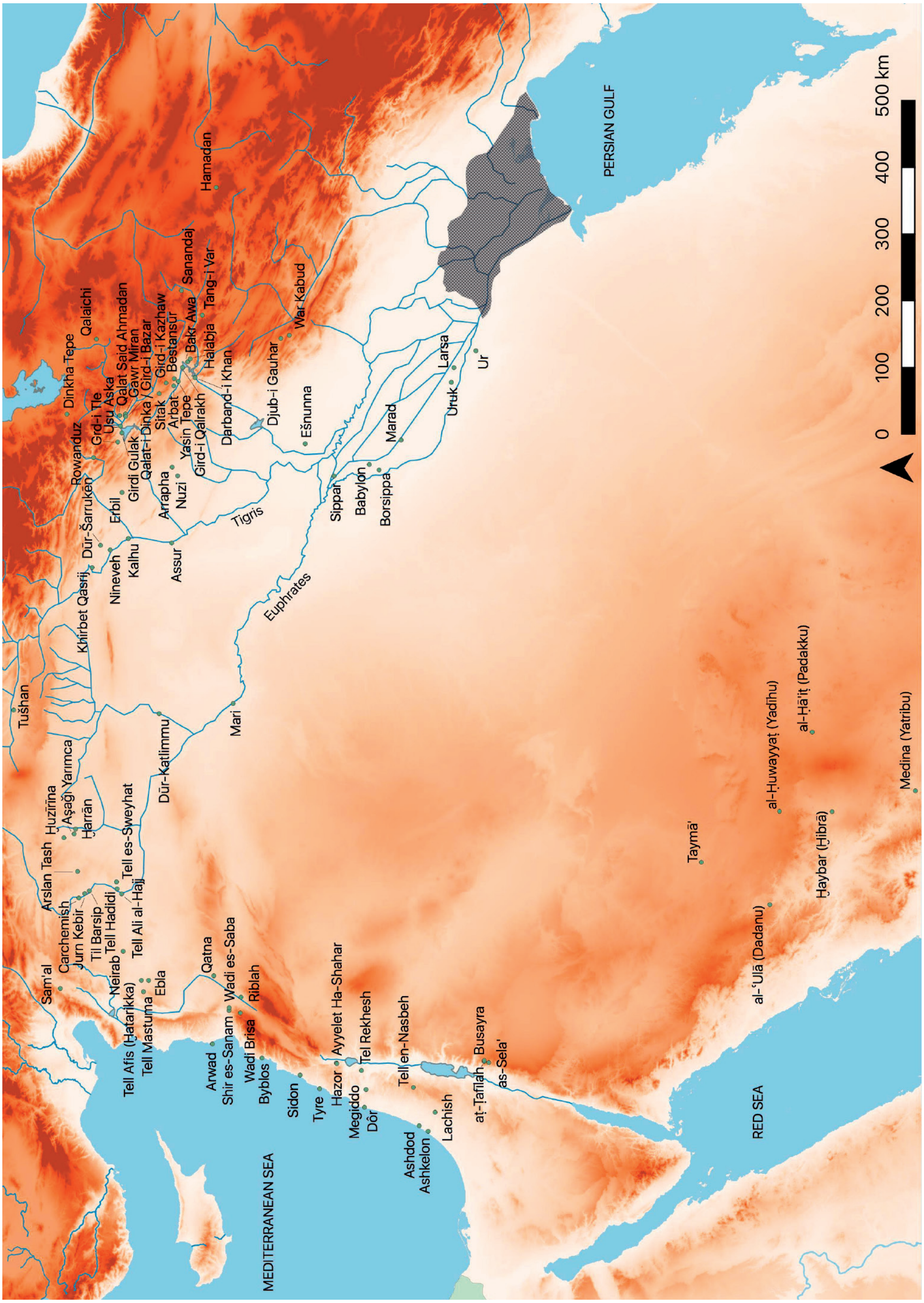
Hamadan
Qalaichi
Dinkha Tepe
Rowanduz
Grd-i Tle
Usu Aska
Qalat Said Ahmadan
Gawr Miran
Gird-i Bazar
Qalat-i Dinka
Gird-i Kazhaw
Bestansur
Sanandaj
Bakr Awa
Halabja
Tang-i Var
Sitak
Arbat
Yasin Tepe
Gird-i Qalrakh
Darband-i Khan
Djub-i Gauhar
War Kabud
Ešnunna
Girdi Gulak
Erbil
Arrapha
Nuzi
Dūr-Šarrukēn
Nineveh
Kalhu
Assur
Khirbet Qasrij
Tigris
Euphrates
Sippar
Babylon
Borsippa
Marad
Uruk
Larsa
Ur
PERSIAN GULF
0 100 200 300 400 500 km
Tušhan
Mari
Dūr-Katlimmu
Huzīrīna
Aşağı Yarımca
Harrān
Tell es-Sweyhat
Arslan Tash
Carchemish
Jurn Kebir
Til Barsip
Tell Hadidi
Tell Ali al-Hajj
Sam'al
Neirab
Ebla
Tell Afis (Hatarikka)
Tell Mastuma
Qatna
Wadi es-Saba
Riblah
Arwad
Shir es-Sanam
Wadi Brisa
Byblos
Sidon
Tyre
Hazor
Ayyelet Ha-Shahar
Tel Rekhesh
Megiddo
Dōr
Tell en-Nasbeh
Ashdod
Ashkelon
Lachish
aṭ-Ṭafilah
Busayra
as-Sela'
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
RED SEA
Taymā'
al-'Ulā (Dadanu)
al-Ḥuwayyaṭ (Yadīhu)
al-Ḥā'iṭ (Padakku)
Ḫaybar (Ḫibrā)
Medina (Yatribu)

Fig. 1: Map indicating the archaeological sites discussed in this volume. Prepared by Andrea Squitieri (LMU Munich).

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1987 *Centre and Periphery in the Ancient World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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MARK ALTAWEEL
University College London[1]

The importance of flat archaeological sites in the Age of Empires and new digital methods for their identification and analysis

A case study from the Peshdar Plain in Iraqi Kurdistan

In the Age of Empires of the first millennium BCE when large, major urban centres dominated the plains of Mesopotamia and the coastal regions of the Mediterranean, the rural landscape began to transform, with settlements often located away from traditional, mounded sites. Finding these sites can be challenging but is not impossible. However, the mountainous regions in Iraq and the neighbouring areas present special methodological challenges. Many sites occupied were flat and low, making them less visible in surveys and even in satellite-based remote sensing data. Machine-learning techniques and the use of point pattern analysis of stone debris offer the possibility of finding the typically less-detectable flat sites using drone (UAV) imagery. Once detected, flat sites offer the considerable advantage that street networks and urban zones can be more easily mapped by using geophysical prospection. This provides advantages in understanding movement within such sites using graph analysis and can help provide insight into social behaviour in the use of urban zones and land use more easily than Bronze Age mounded sites. This paper explores both these issues and discusses their usefulness in Iraqi Kurdistan and beyond.

1. Introduction

Archaeology in Mesopotamia has mostly focused on mounded sites, which are typically highly visible in the landscape. While many such sites warrant this kind of attention, during the first millennium BCE, including in the Neo-Assyrian period, settlements shifted to new areas, often leading to the construction of sites in areas previously unoccupied.[2] In such cases, these settlements often appear flat or have generally low gradients and slopes (e.g., less than 5%). Given their imperceptibility, even when using satellite imagery, this presents a key

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[1] This paper and the underlying research, including development of the StreetAnalysis tool for QGIS (https://plugins.qgis.org/plugins/StreetAnalysis/) and the drone (UAV) analysis of the Dinka Settlement Complex, were developed under the sponsorship of the Peshdar Plain Project directed by Karen Radner (Alexander von Humboldt Professorship of the Ancient History of the Near and Middle East, LMU Munich). We thank the Sulaymaniyah Directorate of Antiquities and Heritage for permission and assistance in making this work possible. The StreetAnalysis tool was created during a fellowship held in autumn 2018 at LMU Munich's Center for Advanced Studies (CAS$^{\mathrm{LMU}}$) within the research focus program "Siedlungen zwischen Diversität und Homogenität," coordinated by Karen Radner.

[2] Wilkinson 2000; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995.

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problem in the detection of such sites. Furthermore, it has become evident that the quantities of ceramics from sites in some of the regions in Iraqi Kurdistan are generally much smaller than those observed elsewhere in Mesopotamia, further complicating site detection.[3] Thus, the development of entirely new methods is necessary in order to find relevant archaeological sites that are not only flat but also, in many cases, date to the first millennium BCE and later.

While typical pedestrian survey methods are not likely to detect relatively flat sites with sparse ceramics coverage, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs; drones) in archaeology has become common, with techniques in image interpretation greatly assisting in the identification of the types of archaeological sites that became increasingly common in the first millennium BCE. Ideally, thermal or multispectral cameras would be used in UAVs; however, even visible light type images have the potential to be highly useful for site detection. In such cases, machine-learning techniques, including supervised and unsupervised classification, along with identification of spatial patterning of stones, could be highly effective in detecting the kinds of settlements we expect to find in the mountainous regions of Iraqi Kurdistan.[4] In particular, as such sites used stone as their primary building material, remains of these stones may be more common than ceramics or other artefacts, indicating that such material should be used for the detection of ancient sites that typically date to the first millennium BCE and later. The advantage of finding relatively flat sites is that they can be more easily studied for their urban structure and layout, as geophysical techniques can be more easily applied; the limited stratigraphic sequences also imply a greater possibility for obtaining snapshot views of large areas of sites. Flat sites are therefore advantageous for research focussed on understanding spatial urban organization.

After identifying relatively flat sites, and once they can be mapped using geophysical prospection, other methodologies can provide insight into the likely location of first millennium BCE public spaces, including markets and social gathering points such as temples. In this case, graph analysis, in which mapped streets are studied for their connectivity, could be used to indicate areas where traffic was likely to have concentrated relatively more in relation to other streets.[5] These techniques also fall within space syntax studies, in which graphing results are used to anticipate likely areas of greater traffic. Combining site detection methods to find relatively flat archaeological sites and using graph analysis on street networks determined through geophysical prospection can, therefore, begin to change our understanding of Iron Age (and later) settlements. While finding relatively flat sites can be frustrating for archaeologists, such sites have the advantage of revealing more about urban morphology than mounded sites which take decades to properly excavate.

This paper discusses two methodologies. The first is used to find archaeological sites in relatively flat or unmounded areas, including cases where minimal ceramics are present. In addition to site detection, the second method applies graph analysis to the results of a street network determined by geophysical prospection in order to demonstrate the likely relevant importance of urban spaces in a first millennium BCE site. This chapter begins by presenting a case study from Iraqi Kurdistan, the site of the Dinka Settlement Complex (DSC) in the Bora Plain. The method for detecting such sites is then presented, demonstrating how sites in mountainous regions or areas that utilise stone for construction, could be located.

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[3] Altaweel et al. 2012.

[4] Altaweel and Squitieri 2019.

[5] Boeing 2019; Altaweel and Wu 2010.

The graph analysis technique, encompassed within a GIS tool developed by the author, is also discussed. Results of the stone detection method are presented as well as a graph analysis of DSC's roads, which demonstrates how flat archaeological sites may offer greater understanding of past social phenomena in the first millennium BCE. The conclusions of this work discuss the benefits of the methodologies and possible future research directions.

2. Background

2.1 Flat sites and surface stones

Surface surveys in the Middle East have mostly focused on mounded and relatively easily-visible sites either from eye-level[6] or from remotely sensed images.[7] Such sites have understandably attracted considerable attention given their visibility, and the fact that many of the great capitals and socially significant sites of the Bronze and Iron Ages are located on major mounded sites. However, both standard, visible light aerial imagery from drones (UAVs) and satellite data often do not easily distinguish sites with low slopes (e.g., < 5%) or low gradients (e.g., < 0.1 m), making the detection of such sites difficult. While the definition of what exactly constitutes a "flat" site is not always agreed on,[8] as most surfaces are not truly flat, it is clear that sites with relatively low slopes are not easily distinguished using the standard imagery and field survey techniques applied by most archaeologists.

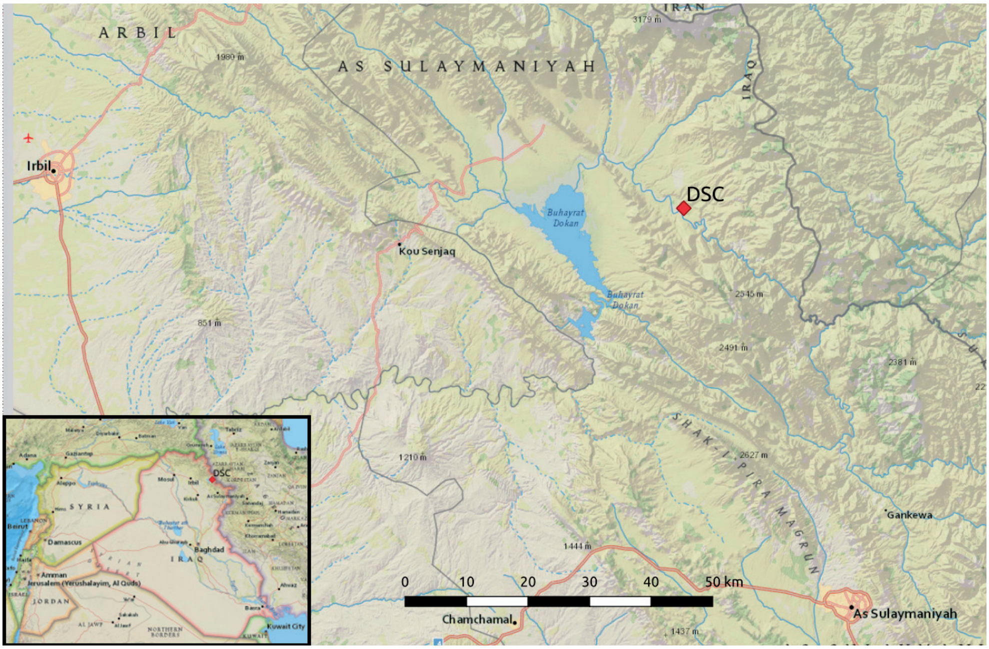
ARBIL
AS SULAYMANIYAH
IRAN
IRAQ
Irbil
DSC
Buhayrat Dokan
Kou Senjaq
SHAK-I-PIRA MAGRUN
Gankewa
Chamchamal
As Sulaymaniyah
0 10 20 30 40 50 km
SYRIA
IRAQ
JORDAN
Baghdad
Mosul
Damascus
Beirut
Aleppo
Amman
Kuwait City

Fig. 1. The location of the Dinka Settlement Complex in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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[6] Adams 1981; Gibson 1972; Finkbeiner 1991.

[7] Kouchoukos 2001; Kennedy 1998.

[8] Hofmann 2012.

Additionally, the low number of ceramics finds further complicates the discovery of archaeological sites. Alternative approaches may be needed to detect sites with minimal accumulated debris and relatively low ceramic density.

Flat sites are common in the first millennium BCE in the Near East,[9] including in Iraqi Kurdistan at the Dinka Settlement Complex in the Bora Plain, located about 60 km north of Sulaymaniyah (Slemani) (Fig. 1). Both at the DSC and in other regions in the province of Sulaymaniyah,[10] low ceramics concentrations make settlements more difficult to detect using surface survey techniques.

However, one benefit offered by the mountainous zones of Iraqi Kurdistan is the abundant availability and use of stone for building architecture. Unlike in the plains of northern Mesopotamia, stone is often found in high concentrations on site surfaces, which potentially makes the ancient settlements more visible. However, distinguishing between natural stones and those used for architecture (and thus stones that were transported by human activity) is not always easy. But as has been noticed in regions such as western Syria,[11] human transportation and deliberate construction are likely to be revealed by patterns and concentrations of stone that differ from the wider background distribution of stones. The presence and distribution of surface stones can, therefore, potentially be used to distinguish archaeological sites, with concentrated patterns revealing clear clusters that are distinct from the wider distribution of stones and thus indicating that human occupation was likely in a given area.

2.2 Case study: Dinka Settlement Complex

To demonstrate the utility of these advanced methods, this paper presents a case study using the Dinka Settlement Complex. Excavations and geophysical prospection have revealed an archaeological settlement at the DSC sprawling across 60 ha.[12] The settlement consists of an eroded natural hill, called Qalat-i Dinka, which rises about 40 m above the plain, with the lower Zab river flanking it on the west. Another part of the site is Girdi-i Bazar, which is a small mound of less than 1 ha that is both naturally relatively higher on the plain but also has some accumulated human occupation. The remainder of the site spreads across the alluvial Bora plain, with Cretaceous limestone ridges to the east of the site.

Initial field observations in 2015 did not suggest the existence of a wide site that spread across the plain, as the ceramic surface survey only revealed 776 diagnostic sherds over 60 ha, a number generally low by Near East standards.[13] At the beginning of the excavations, only the area within and around Girdi-i Bazar was believed to have been occupied, with evident Iron Age remains. However, first confirmation of the presence of an extended archaeological site was obtained by the geoarchaeological trenches excavated between Girdi-i Bazar and Qalat-i Dinka in 2015.[14] The geoarchaeological studies confirmed that the surface stones at the DSC were transported in antiquity for use as building materials and were not natural stones found on the surface. Excavations at Girdi-i Bazar and later also in DLT2 and DLT3 further confirmed the existence of occupational and structural remains. Juxtaposing the geophysical results, the archaeological trenches and the ceramic remains observed indicated that the settlement extends over a much wider area than initially thought (Fig. 2).

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[9] Wilkinson 2000.

[10] Altaweel et al. 2012.

[11] Philip et al. 2002.

[12] Radner et al. 2018; Fassbinder et al. 2017; 2018.

[13] Giraud 2016.

[14] Altaweel and Marsh 2016.

While the Peshdar Plain Project was fortunate to have found this extended settlement site, it opens up the question of how such a site could be identified without geophysical survey and geoarchaeological trenches, as these are not generally part of most surveys, nor can they be easily applied across many sites. As archaeological survey data and geophysical results are available for DSC, these data can be used to determine how well an approach that integrates UAV imagery manages to identify built-up areas underground. The results of this case study can then be applied to identify other sites in regions similar to that of DSC.

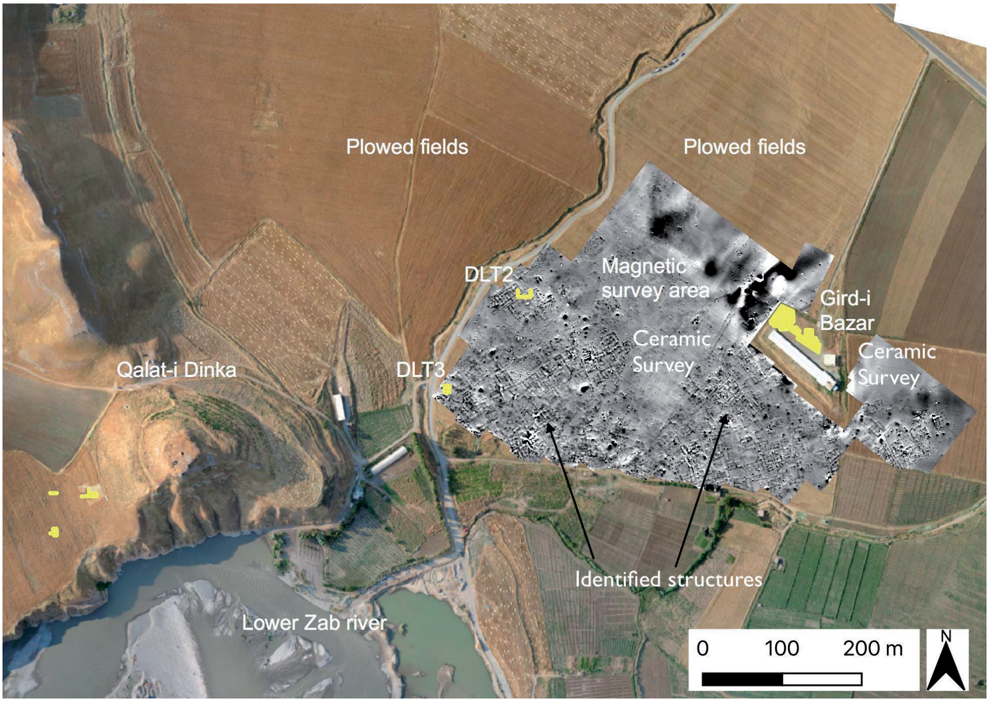

Fig. 2: The site of the Dinka Settlement Complex spread across the Bora Plain showing areas of different archaeological work.

3. Methods

3.1 Imagery and K-means cluster

With the paper of Altaweel and Squitieri (2019) providing full details on the methods used, it will therefore suffice to summarize these methods briefly here. To map the DSC, a DJI Phantom 4 Pro drone (UAV) was used during the autumn 2018 season to capture imagery at a height of 80 m, using a CMOS 20 mega-pixel sensor. Ideal conditions for image recovery include clear skies to ensure good lighting and minimal vegetation cover. The images were then processed using Agisoft Photoscan to create orthophotos. After this, ENVI 5.5 software was used to conduct a machine-learning unsupervised k-means cluster analysis consisting of 24 identified classes with two iterations. Open source tools, including deep learning and artificial intelligence tools such as Python Keras (2020)[15] or Scikit-learn (2020),[16] can potentially also be used. Regardless of which tools are used, the k-means cluster analysis used here distinguishes between features in the orthophotos that include natural and anthropogenic elements.[17] Where possible, roads and wadis, including recently built features, were excluded from our analysis to minimize signal interference.

Once the k-means clustering method has been applied, features such as rocks or other items can be distinguished by the classes determined by this unsupervised classification method. One class distinguishes rock features evident on the surface of the site, and this class was exported as a shapefile to QGIS for analysis. In order to test the validity of this identification of stones, nine random 40 × 40 m squares on the orthophotos were sampled. With over 9,000 stones sampled from the k-means cluster analysis, true positives and false positive readings were measured, resulting in a positive predictive value (PPV; true positives/[true positives+false positives]) of 0.96. This indicates that we achieved a precision level of about 96% in identifying stones, suggesting that this technique is indeed sufficient for identifying stone features on site surfaces.[18] With this confirmation, the full analysis of stones was then assessed.

3.2 Regression analysis and point pattern analysis

The results from the k-means classification can then be taken and compared to the surface ceramics survey and the results of the geophysical survey. This allows us to see how well the surface stones match architecture as determined by geophysics, while also comparing this result to ceramics picked up during the pedestrian survey. A simple linear regression can be used to determine how well the k-means classification determined the mapping of surface stones to architecture identified by the geophysical survey.[19] With this, we now have outputs from the analysis that demonstrate how well the surface ceramic survey compares to the mapping of surface stones for site detection.

Additionally, a k-nearest neighbour point pattern analysis (PPA) is run to determine the concentration of stones that represent an ancient site.[20] PPA helps to distinguish the approximate level of stone concentration that one could reasonably use to indicate whether an archaeological site is present. The PPA analysis provides an output that demonstrates whether identified points (stones in this case) are likely to be randomly or non-randomly distributed, with less random distribution suggesting the presence of human activity.

Furthermore, contrasting between on-site and off-site PPA indicates what level of variation is possible between these two types of areas, which can demonstrate whether an archaeological site is likely to be present. The presence of an archaeological site should result in a higher stone concentration than a non-archaeological area. The Nearest Neighbour Index (NNI) can be used as output values for on- and off-site measurements for PPA, demonstrating where stone distributions are likely to be the result of human activity rather than the result of random distribution.

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[15] https://keras.io/. Last accessed 18 May 2020.

[16] https://scikit-learn.org/stable/. Last accessed 15 May 2020.

[17] Altaweel and Squitieri 2019; Wu 2012; Richard 2013.

[18] Brenning 2009.

[19] Fassbinder et al. 2017; 2018; Giraud 2016.

[20] Illian 2008.

3.3 Graph analysis

While the case study presented here compares geophysical data and how it maps to stones found using UAV imagery, this was only done for validation purposes. The main reason one would want to carry out an assessment of surface stones using UAV imagery is to find a site without having first done a geophysical survey. In fact, the expected order would be to find a site using UAV imagery, using the k-mean and PPA analysis demonstrated here, and then to carry out a geophysical survey to map any architectural features. This technique offers the potential of identifying many more single-period sites than are currently known.

The benefit of finding single-period or short-lived sites, including flat sites, is that they can reveal clear architectural features using geophysical analysis, including magnetometry. Street networks can be more easily mapped, enabling one to see a footprint of ancient streets and their relation to different neighbourhoods or architectural features in urban contexts. In turn, mapping streets enables the identification of key areas where public spaces or important buildings and institutions, such as markets and temples, may have been located. This make flat sites potentially important for understanding Near Eastern social institutions and urban contexts, as relatively few settlements have been fully mapped.

With the methods advanced earlier for finding flat sites, the method demonstrated here then permits researchers to better understand urban social spaces by studying movement patterns using space syntax graph analyses.[21] Different graph analyses, including centrality measures such as betweenness, closeness, degree, efficiency, and straightness could be utilised.[22] All of these centrality measures are used in an analysis based on a GIS tool created by the author, which was first developed during a fellowship held at LMU Munich's Center for Advanced Studies (CAS$^{\text{LMU}}$) in autumn 2018.[23] In summary, the centrality measures offer different ways to determine central areas or places likely to be the most trafficked, based on the connectivity of streets to each other. Betweenness centrality measures the influence of a node in connections between other nodes (i.e., how important a node is for moving between different places). Closeness centrality measures the inverse distance of nodes; degree centrality measures the number of connections a node has. Efficiency and straightness centrality measure the importance of a node to a network based on its removal and how straight a given path is between nodes respectively.

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[21] Jiang and Liu 2009.

[22] Liu et al. 2015; Crucitti et al. 2006.

[23] https://plugins.qgis.org/plugins/StreetAnalysis/; the tool can be downloaded from QGIS (www.qgis.org/) by searching for Street Analysis (2020).

4. Results

4.1 Site detection

Fig. 3 demonstrates results from the k-means cluster analysis, where identified stones are indicated, along with 40 × 40 m sample squares used for PPV. Overall, 24 classes, as identified using the k-means cluster assessment, were used in the analysis. From these classes, only one was deemed relevant: class 23. This class shows stones that are marked on Fig. 3, with over 82,000 stones shown in the figure. Two iterations of the k-means cluster assessment were sufficient to yield the results shown. Next, an NNI index was applied using stones identified in the known on-site areas (the area covered by geophysical survey) and off-site areas from the DSC. Areas such as wadis, roads, and the modern chicken farm that occupies part of Gird-i Bazar were removed from the analysis to prevent interference in the results, as these are either modern or clearly intrusive.

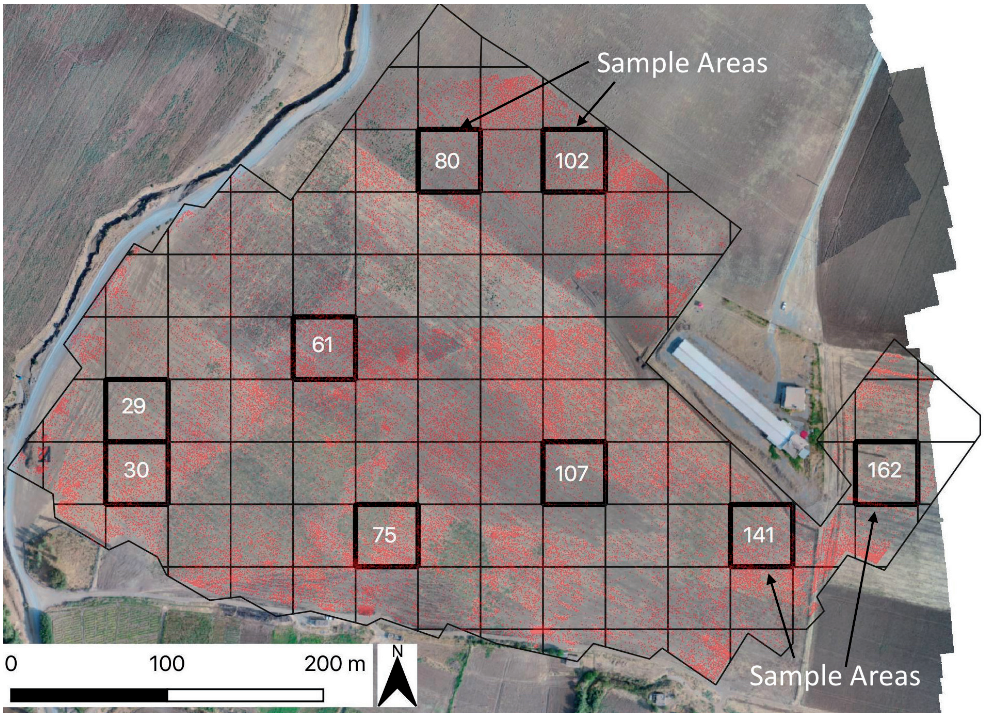

Fig. 3: Identified stones across the Dinka Settlement Complex and sample squares for PPV.

Fig. 4 and Table 1 demonstrate results of the NNI analysis along with observed and expected mean distance. The mean distance reflects mean distance between stones, which indicates a much tighter clustering of stones in the on-site areas. Overall, the NNI results indicate that stone concentrations are much more pronounced in the geophysical, on-site areas, with the NNI value lower there than the off-site areas. Values closer to 0 suggest a tightly-clustered distribution, indicating that the on-site stones are not only more closely clustered together but are also likely to be less random in distribution, which is what one would expect from a more natural distribution. The NNI values, in other words, suggest that such a value is what can be expected for an ancient settlement having stone architecture, with the remains of this architecture evident on the surface.

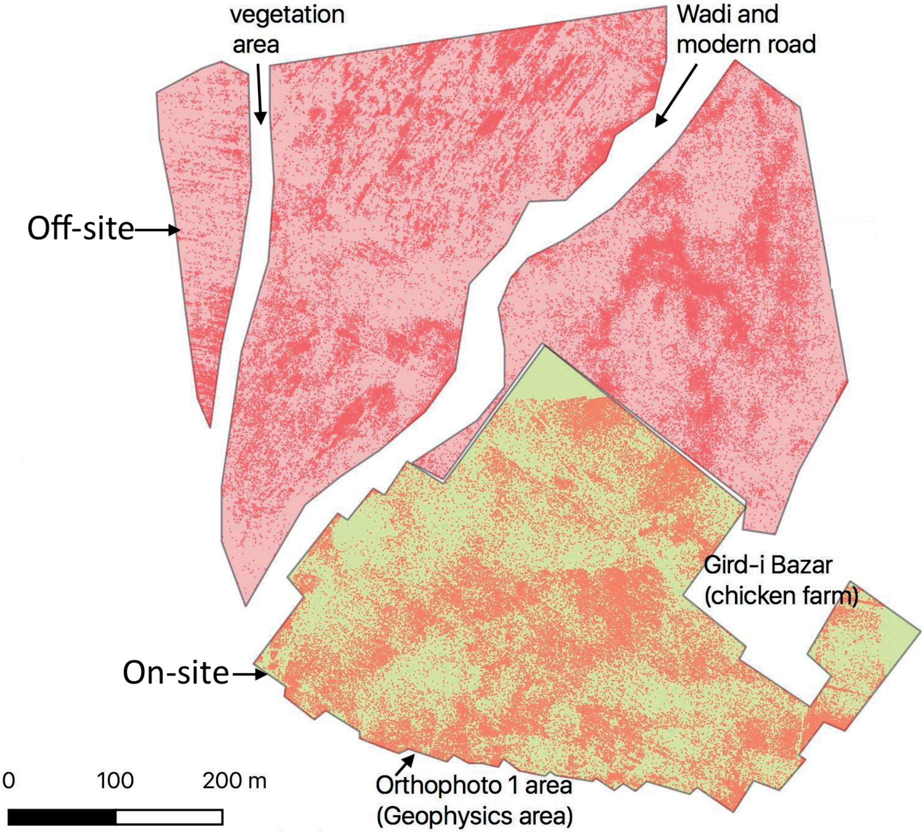
vegetation area
Wadi and modern road
Off-site
On-site
Gird-i Bazar (chicken farm)
0
100
200 m
Orthophoto 1 area (Geophysics area)

Fig. 4: In pink, the areas covered off-site, and in yellow, the areas covered on-site (as indicated by the magnetometer survey), as used for the present analysis. Note that the stone concentrations are denser in the on-site areas.

Table 1. The NNI results and mean distances observed for the two divided areas.

Place	Observed Mean Distance	Expected Mean Distance	NNI
Off-Site	0,3893	0,8962	0,4344
On-Site	0.0155	0.5155	0.0302

While the above analysis was carried out to demonstrate which imagery signatures demonstrate the clear presence of surface stones and where they are concentrated, the utility of this approach is made evident when compared to the surface ceramic survey. Fig. 5 reflects areas where diagnostic sherds were found in the DSC and its surrounding area. This output can be taken and a regression analysis can be carried out that compares the architectural remains, using built area from the identified features in the geophysical results, and the ceramic surface survey. Then the stone counts from the k-means cluster, surface ceramics, and identified architecture can be compared in a regression.

Table 2 shows the sherd count along with the stone count and built area for the pottery collection zones used in the survey. The three measurements - ceramic count, stone count, and architecture area - allow a regression to be applied for all three values, indicating how ceramic sherd count and stone counts demonstrate goodness-of-fit relative to built-up areas. In other words, the values help to demonstrate whether pottery sherds or stones act as a better fit to built-up areas in this case. This helps to establish whether stone counts might prove to be a better indicator of settlement.

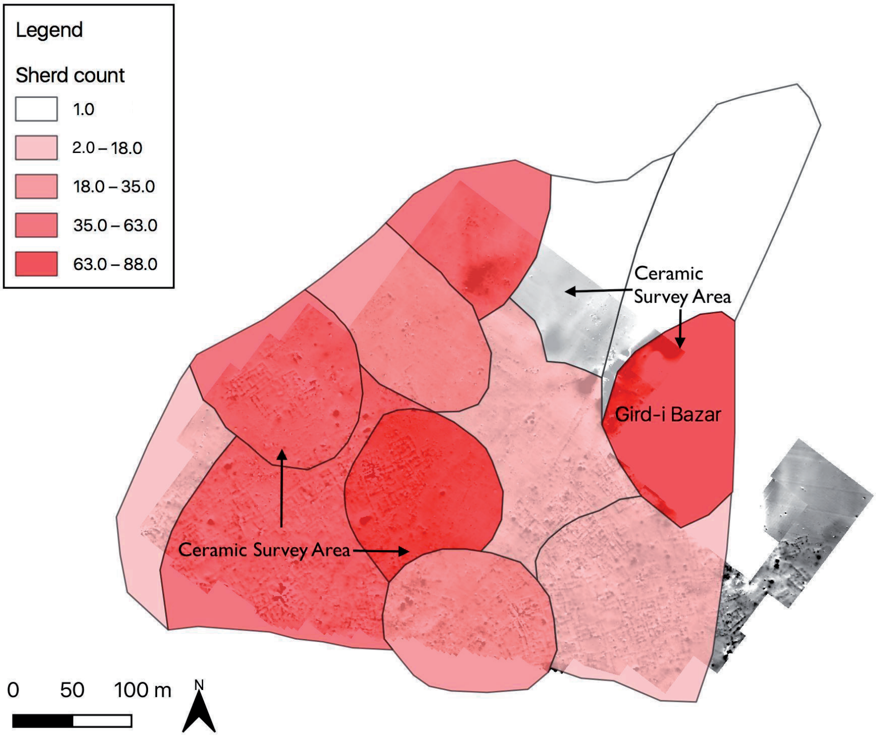

Fig. 5: Areas (outlined) of the DSC where a ceramic surface survey was conducted (after Giraud 2016).

Table 2. Sherd count, built area, and stone count for given survey collection areas.

Area ID	**Sherd Count**	**Built-up Area (m^2)**	**Stone Count**
1282	1	0	1635
1284	48	4070	3670
1285	42	0	3964
1286	35	1686	3603
1287	18	746	2043
1288	30	3626	9829
1290	10	9184	10593
1291	77	3896	12155
1292	1	0	5404
1298	63	8712	15477
1299	9	4009	13651

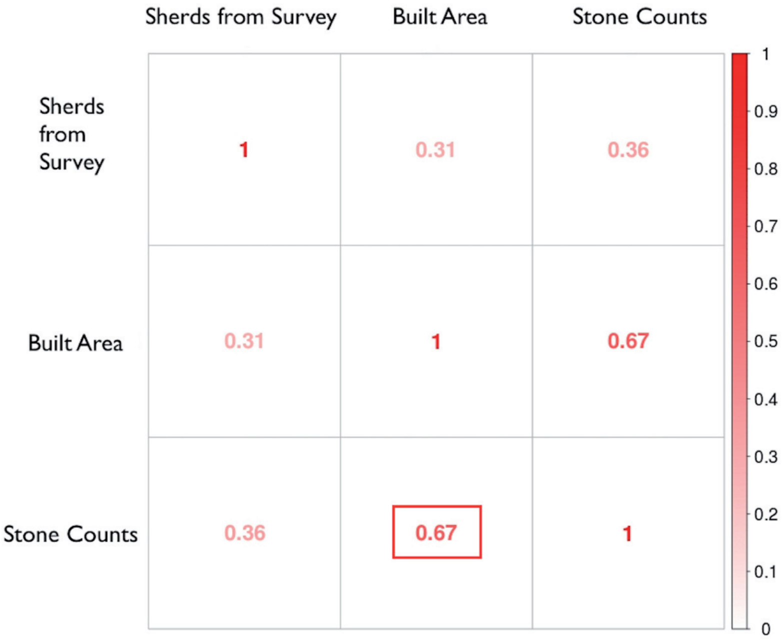

Fig. 6: Regression applied across 150 × 150 m sample squares across the DSC that compared normalized ceramic and stone remains to evident architecture. The values indicate r^2 results, showing the strongest fit is between stones and built area.

Fig. 6 reflects a regression carried out within 150 × 150 m squares divided across the DSC and clipped to the area of the site and survey areas. In this case, it is clear that the fit is stronger between stone architecture and surface stones, while the fit is weaker between ceramic sherds and stone architecture. The fit of the surface ceramics to architecture, determined by geophysics is $r^2 = 0.31$, which is a relatively weaker fit than that of the stones found on the surface of the DSC.

In fact, r^2 improves to 0.77 (Fig. 7) for surface stones and built-area from geophysics if sampling areas do not have a standardized 150 × 150 m measure but are simply divided into regions with architecture based on geophysics and areas with virtually no architecture, with only five sample regions used in this case (Fig. 8). Overall, this generally indicates that surface stones have a stronger relationship to architectural site remains determined by geophysics.

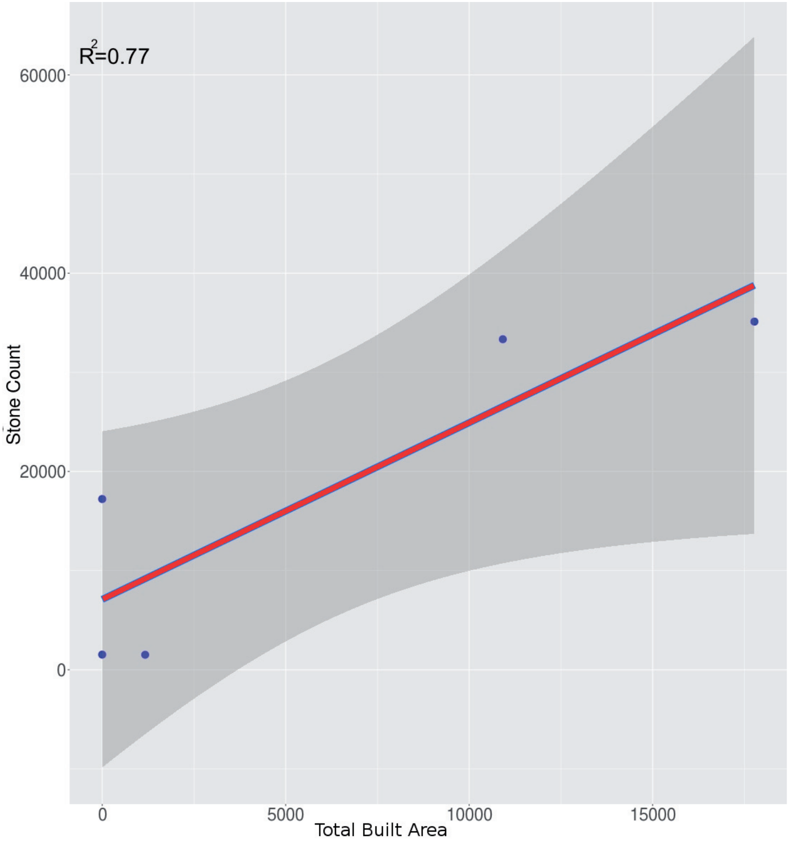

Fig. 7: Regression showing goodness-of-fit for five areas across the DSC, including areas with and without architecture.

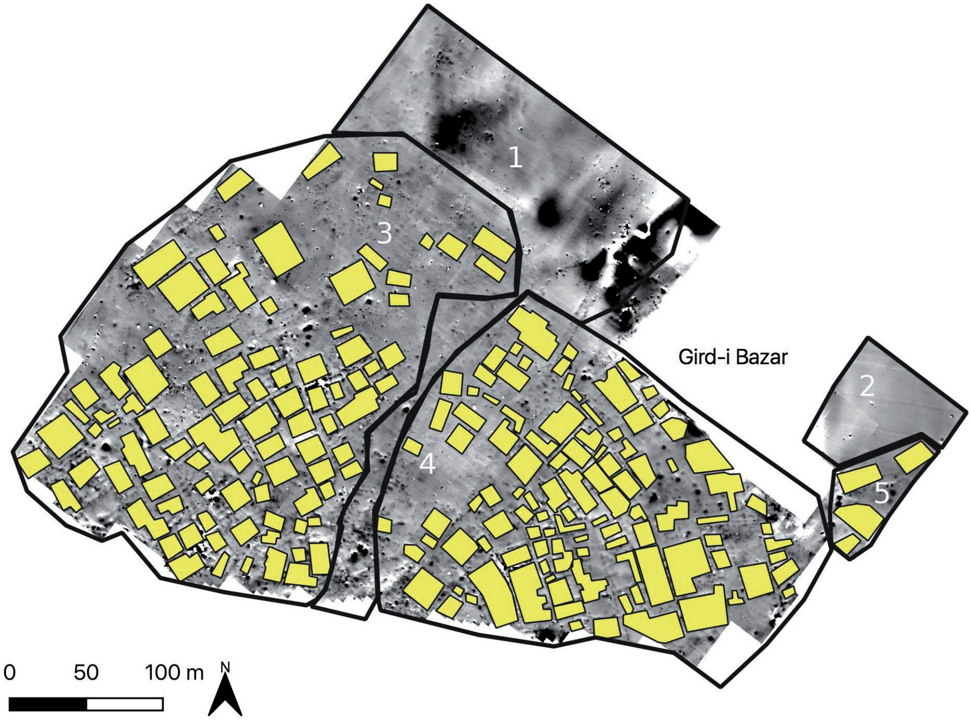

Fig. 8: Division of sample areas (numbered) used in the coarser regression for areas with built architecture and areas with minimal or no clear architecture.

4.1 Graph Analysis

The graph analysis discussed in the methods, using the StreetAnalysis tool,[24] was applied to the DSC based on the results of the geophysical survey discussed above. These results help to map streets and indicate given routes within the DSC. Results of the graph analysis of the streets and routes are shown in Fig. 9, which provides betweenness, closeness, efficiency, and straightness centrality measures.

These measurements are used to identify the streets that are most connected to other streets, where the most-connected streets are also likely to be streets with the highest levels of traffic. The results here are very similar, indicating the main east-west road and routes to the northeast and southwest in the site are likely to have the most traffic. The results show that accessing the various identified streets throughout the DSC requires heavy use of the street segments identified. These areas could be expected to include markets, temples, or some form of public buildings. While excavation results have not verified this, the geophysical survey shows some potentially large buildings along the routes with the likely or suspected busiest traffic levels.[25]

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[24] https://plugins.qgis.org/plugins/StreetAnalysis/ (last accessed 8 May 2020).

[25] Fassbinder et al. 2017; 2018.

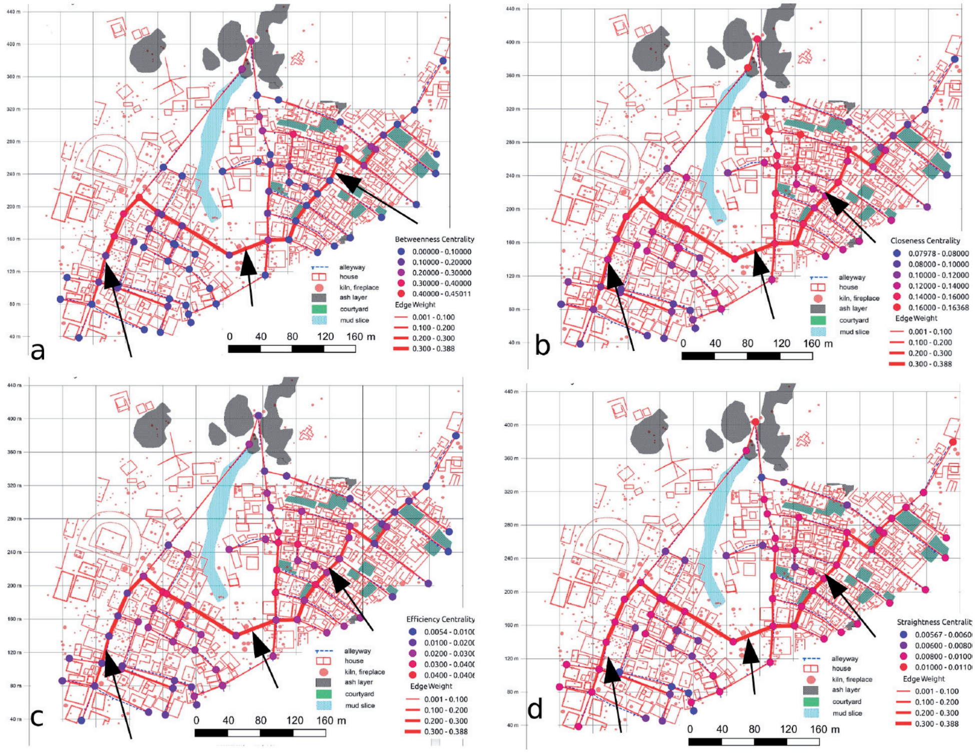
a
Betweenness Centrality
0.00000 - 0.10000
0.10000 - 0.20000
0.20000 - 0.30000
0.30000 - 0.40000
0.40000 - 0.45011
Edge Weight
0.001 - 0.100
0.100 - 0.200
0.200 - 0.300
0.300 - 0.388
alleyway
house
kiln, fireplace
ash layer
courtyard
mud slice
0 40 80 120 160 m
b
Closeness Centrality
0.07978 - 0.08000
0.08000 - 0.10000
0.10000 - 0.12000
0.12000 - 0.14000
0.14000 - 0.16000
0.16000 - 0.16368
c
Efficiency Centrality
0.0054 - 0.010
0.0100 - 0.020
0.0200 - 0.030
0.0300 - 0.040
0.0400 - 0.040
d
Straightness Centralit
0.00567 - 0.0060
0.00600 - 0.0080
0.00800 - 0.0100
0.01000 - 0.0110
40 m
80 m
120 m
160 m
200 m
240 m
280 m
320 m
360 m
400 m
440 m

Fig. 9: Results of betweenness (a), closeness (b), efficiency (c), and straightness (d) centrality using the QGIS Street Analysis tool created. Degree centrality results are not indicated because they are very similar to the displayed results. Arrows indicate areas of high relative traffic as determined by the graph analyses. For feature interpretations, see Fassbinder et al. 2018

Based on these results, core samples from both the potentially busiest streets and streets deemed to be less busy in the past are currently being analysed by Eileen Eckmeier at LMU Munich. Investigation of street-level sediments may demonstrate proxies for greater or less traffic. This is similar to a study conducted earlier at Kerkenes Dağ in Anatolia, which combined modelling and geoarchaeology to demonstrate which urban streets likely had more ancient traffic.[26] In this case, smaller-sized sediment particles suggested greater levels of trampling and the streets suggested as the most trafficked in the modelling approach matched the streets with the smallest sediment particles. We hope similar results could be demonstrated for the DSC, potentially indicating the benefit of studying flat sites which may also then give us insight about where important urban structures may have been located.

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[26] Altaweel and Wu 2010.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The first millennium BCE is distinct in Near Eastern archaeology in that many new sites were established on relatively flat landscapes. In Iraqi Kurdistan, this also means often that minimal levels of ceramics are found on the surface. Detecting such sites is difficult using traditional pedestrian survey techniques, or even when satellite remote sensing data are used. However, using images that show surface stones, even without the benefit of thermal cameras or multi-spectral sensors, can enable the detection of sites, particularly in regions where stone architecture is likely to have been common. Machine-learning techniques can distinguish stones, while PPA techniques help to distinguish concentrations of stones relative to the background noise in a region. Values that show large differences in PPA between areas that can be designated as sites and those areas outside of sites could be the critical output for identifying whether a site is detected. This approach could substantially aid in the recovery of first millennium BCE and later sites which, up to now, are under-represented in the archaeological record, even though they likely form an important urban component in a period of large empires and states. New methods such as the ones presented here are needed if we are to improve the recovery of such sites. Sites with NNI values lower than 0.1 for identified stones suggest the likely presence of intentionally-deposited stones in regions where stone dispersion is more random or less likely. Other values are possible, but generally values well below 1 will show dense concentrations of stones that we would not expect in regions where relatively few surface stones are typical. The value for detecting sites may need to be adjusted, however, in regions that have a higher concentration of naturally occurring surface stones (e.g., in the case of water-transported stones). In the case of the DSC, it can be demonstrated that surface stones generally appear primarily as a result of human activity.[27]

While the objective of site recovery, by itself, is sufficient to warrant more research on the use of machine-learning, there is another reason why it is worthwhile to identify specifically flat sites. Once detected, flat sites can provide insights not normally available to us when dealing with long-lived, multi-layered sites. Specifically, geophysical surveying allows us to more easily map flat sites than settlement mounds and this is enormously useful for reconstructing urban street networks. With urban street networks, graph analyses permit a space syntax approach for determining likely street nodes and edges where higher levels of traffic may have traversed in the past. As the results of this analysis are currently being tested in the DSC, for now the graph analyses outputs indicate that public spaces and large-scale building structures (potentially sanctuaries or markets) may have concentrated near a main thoroughfare running east-west or northeast to southwest. Archaeological excavation will need to validate whether such buildings were indeed present in the areas along this route.

However, already the results presented here highlight the great potential offered by a tool that can identify the locations of important buildings within a site. Overall, the work presented in this paper demonstrates, firstly, the usefulness of a machine-learning and PPA approach for detecting sites in areas that are detrimental to their easy identification by using the methods typically applied in the Middle East, and secondly, the potential of an analytical technique that can serve to reveal important spaces within ancient settlements.

[27] Altaweel and Marsh 2016.

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The southern Levant in the shadow of imperial powers

Tel Rekhesh in the late Iron Age

1. Introduction

From the latter half of the eighth to the fourth centuries BCE, the southern Levant was in the shadow of three successive superpowers. It was first profoundly influenced by the Assyrian Empire, and then under direct or indirect imperial rule exercised by Assyria[1] and Babylonia, and then by Achaemenid Persia.[2]

To date, most of discussions concerning the southern Levant in this period have concentrated upon the geo-political entity Judah, first a small kingdom that controlled the Judaean hills and its immediate vicinity, and then under Achaemenid rule became Yehud, an autonomous ethnic community centred in Jerusalem.[3] In contrast, the northern part of the southern Levant has not attracted adequate attention.[4] This lack of interest can be explained by the enthusiastic attitude of Christian and Jewish scholars toward Judah or Judaea, where a large part of the Hebrew Bible was authored, compiled, and revised. Another reason is that other than the Hebrew Bible there are only a handful of literary sources for reconstructing the history of the northern part of the southern Levant during this period.[5] After the demise of the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 720 BCE,[6] whose capital was in Samaria, the Hebrew Bible refers infrequently to events in the former territories of the Northern Kingdom. The few epigraphic sources that have either been uncovered in this region so far or that refer to the region do not suffice to reconstruct a comprehensive history of the northern part of the

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[1] The Northern Kingdom of Israel became a client kingdom of Assyria first in the late ninth century BCE. Later, it was conquered by Assyria and its territory was annexed into the Assyrian Empire in the late eighth century BCE. Conversely, the Southern Kingdom of Judah became a client kingdom of Assyria and Babylonia until it was conquered by Babylonia.

[2] Recently, archaeological evidence of the Egyptian control of the Southern Levant during the last part of the seventh century BCE has drawn scholarly attention. See Fantalkin 2015. However, this study will not include the short period of Egyptian domination of this region under the 26th Dynasty.

[3] E.g., Lipschits and Blenkinsopp 2003; Lipschits 2005; Lipschits and Oeming 2006; Lipschits, Knoppers and Albertz 2007; Lipschits, Knoppers and Oeming 2011.

[4] Ephraim Stern (2001: 42-57) sketches the provinces of Megiddo and Samaria during the Assyrian period.

[5] For a most comprehensive study of the cuneiform sources concerning the Southern Levant during this period, see Zilberg 2018.

[6] For the historical and archaeological studies on the demise of the Kingdom of Israel, see most recently, Hasegawa et al. 2018.

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southern Levant in this period. In consequence, the history of this region has not drawn the scholarly attention it deserves.

However, archaeological data that has accumulated since the nineteenth century from several different sites has begun to cast considerable light on the society of the northern part of the southern Levant. Accordingly, it is now desirable to start bringing all the evidence together to discuss various aspects of the society in this region in the shadow of three successive superpowers.

One of the questions regarding the Neo-Babylonian period in the southern Levant was whether the Babylonians ever established an effective administrative system in the region. In his recent article summarising the results of recent archaeological studies in the Neo-Babylonian period, Jeffrey R. Zorn states:

> "The Babylonians seem little interested in the Levant other than as a source of natural and human plunder to be used in the rebuilding of Babylonia. There is debate over whether the Babylonians took over the earlier Assyrian provincial system, or even whether they had a clear administrative system at all for the Levant."[7]

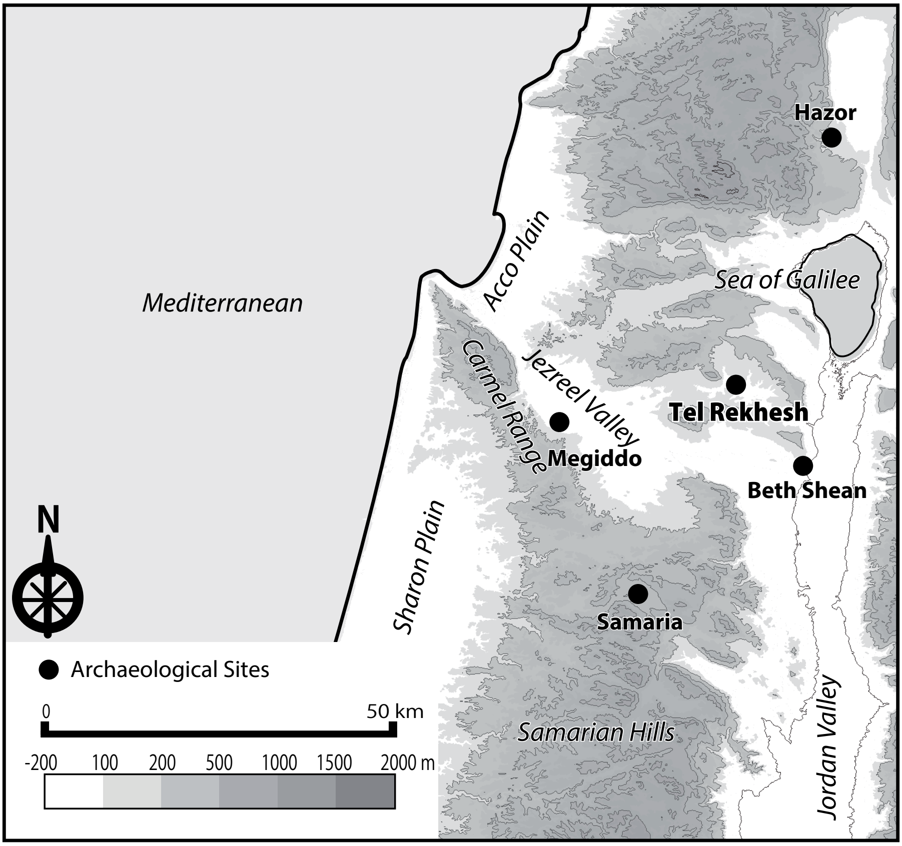
Hazor
Mediterranean
Acco Plain
Sea of Galilee
Carmel Range
Jezreel Valley
Tel Rekhesh
Megiddo
Beth Shean
N
Sharon Plain
Samaria
Archaeological Sites
0
50 km
Samarian Hills
Jordan Valley
-200
100
200
500
1000
1500
2000 m

Fig. 1: Map of Tel Rekhesh. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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[7] Zorn 2014: 837.

In the same line of thought, Avraham Faust puts as follows:

> “It appears that the Babylonians came to the west to sack, not to invest. They took what they could and planned to take their share of anything that the area would produce in the future – from what it would produce and no further. They had no intention of investing in order to increase this productivity.”[8]

This is the traditional view of Babylonian policy for controlling the southern Levant after they conquered the region in the early sixth century BCE.[9] Avraham Faust, who vindicates this traditional view, states:

> “The lack of evidence for any Babylonian imperial administration in the region was stressed by many, and stands in sharp contrast to the reality in the Neo-Assyrian period, when finds attesting Assyrian imperial administrative were well-known.”[10]

According to another view, subscribed to by many, Babylonia inherited its administrative system from Assyria.[11] This view, expressed especially with regard to the situation in Judah, has been refuted by several scholars for a series of reasons that should not be repeated here in detail.[12]

Yet one issue concerning the difference between the Assyrian and Babylonian policies toward the Levant suggested by David Vanderhooft (2013) may be pertinent to the present discussion, and shall be described here. Vanderhooft reminds us that not a few former “provinces” of Assyria had restored their “independence” with their own monarchs when the Babylonians expanded their sphere of dominion to the Levant.[13] In such regions, the Babylonians could not simply take over the Assyrian administrative system but instead needed to establish new ones if they were interested in achieving economic gain from these conquered domains (which Vanderhooft sees as less likely).

The situation in the Assyrian province of Samaria reported by Adam Zertal (2003), however, seems to be at odds with Vanderhooft’s theory. Discerning differences from the material culture of Iron Age II, Zertal defines the period from 722 to 332 BCE as “Iron Age III,” emphasising the continuity of material culture during this period in the region. He states as follows:

> “From the archaeological point of view, the material culture of this period [i.e., the Neo-Babylonian period] also seems to have changed but little from the Assyrian period.”[14]

These contradicting views originate partly in the dearth of information on Babylonian rule in the southern Levant, especially in its northern part. In the following, I would like to share some of the recent results of our excavations at Tel Rekhesh in north Israel, in order to throw more light on the material culture of this period in the northern part of the southern Levant.

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[8] Faust 2012: 191.

[9] Faust 2012: 188-194.

[10] Faust 2012: 196.

[11] Barstad 1996; 2003; Lipschits 2005.

[12] Vanderhooft 2003; Faust 2012.

[13] Vanderhooft 2013: 237-241.

[14] Zertal 2003: 405.

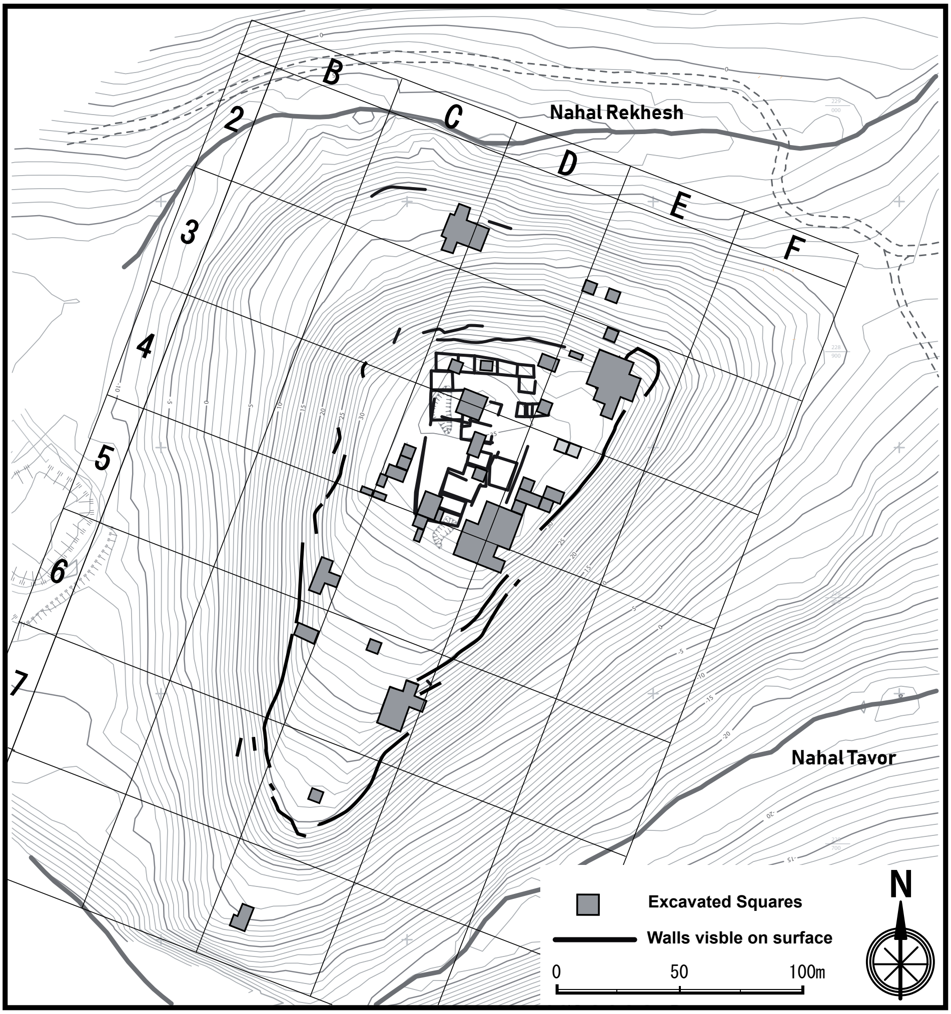

Fig. 2: Excavated squares at Tel Rekhesh (2006–2017). © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

2. About the site and the excavations

Tel Rekhesh (Tell Mukharkhash) is one of the two largest archaeological sites in eastern Lower Galilee (Fig. 1). The site lies on a natural hill located at the confluence of the Tabor River (Nahal Tavor), which runs from Mt. Tabor and pours into the Jordan River, and the Rekhesh River (Nahal Rekhesh), which is a brook originating from a nearby spring. The peak of the mound is 34 m a.s.l., and the area covers c. 45,000 sq. metres. The mound forms an oval shape, with the long axis aligned northeast-southwest. A long slope forms three terraces along the southwestern side of the mound. A flat area of c. 600 sq. metres covers the crest of the mound.

The archaeological expedition to Tel Rekhesh (The Tel Rekhesh Project), consisting of international scholars mainly from various universities and institutes from Japan, started excavating the site in 2006. The results of the excavations have contributed to the understanding of the settlement history of the region which had formerly been less clear. The first stage of excavation (2006–2010) opened areas at various points at the site in an effort to elucidate its settlement history.[15]

The second stage of excavation (2013–2017) focused on the crest of the mound.[16] One of the main goals of the second stage was to investigate a monumental building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC on the southern part of the mound's crest (Fig. 2).[17]

3. The Late Iron Age building complex

The entire building complex is assumed to measure c. 55 × 35 metres (see below). Each part of the complex discovered during the excavation will be described in the following sections.

3.1 Southeastern corner (Fig. 3)

The southern part of this building complex was well preserved. We excavated the southern enclosing wall (width c. 1 m) and the southwestern and southeastern corners of the complex. A stone-paved entrance to a courtyard in the complex was unearthed adjacent to the southeastern corner.

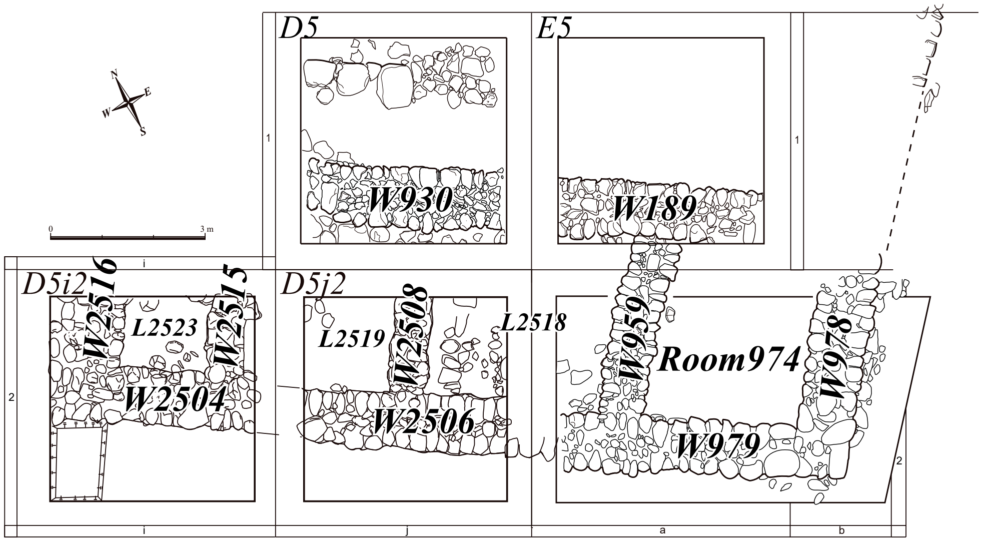

Fig. 3: Southeastern corner of the building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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[15] Paz and Kuwabara 2007; Paz et al. 2010; Hasegawa 2010; Tsukimoto et al. 2011; 2013.

[16] Hasegawa and Paz 2015; Hasegawa et al. 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020a.

[17] Hasegawa et al. 2020b.

A small room (Room 974; c. 4 × 4 m) was found inside the southeastern corner of the complex. Thick, white plaster fragments, possibly part of a collapsed plaster installation, were excavated from inside the room. The curved shapes of some of the fragments possibly formed the rounded sections of a bathtub.

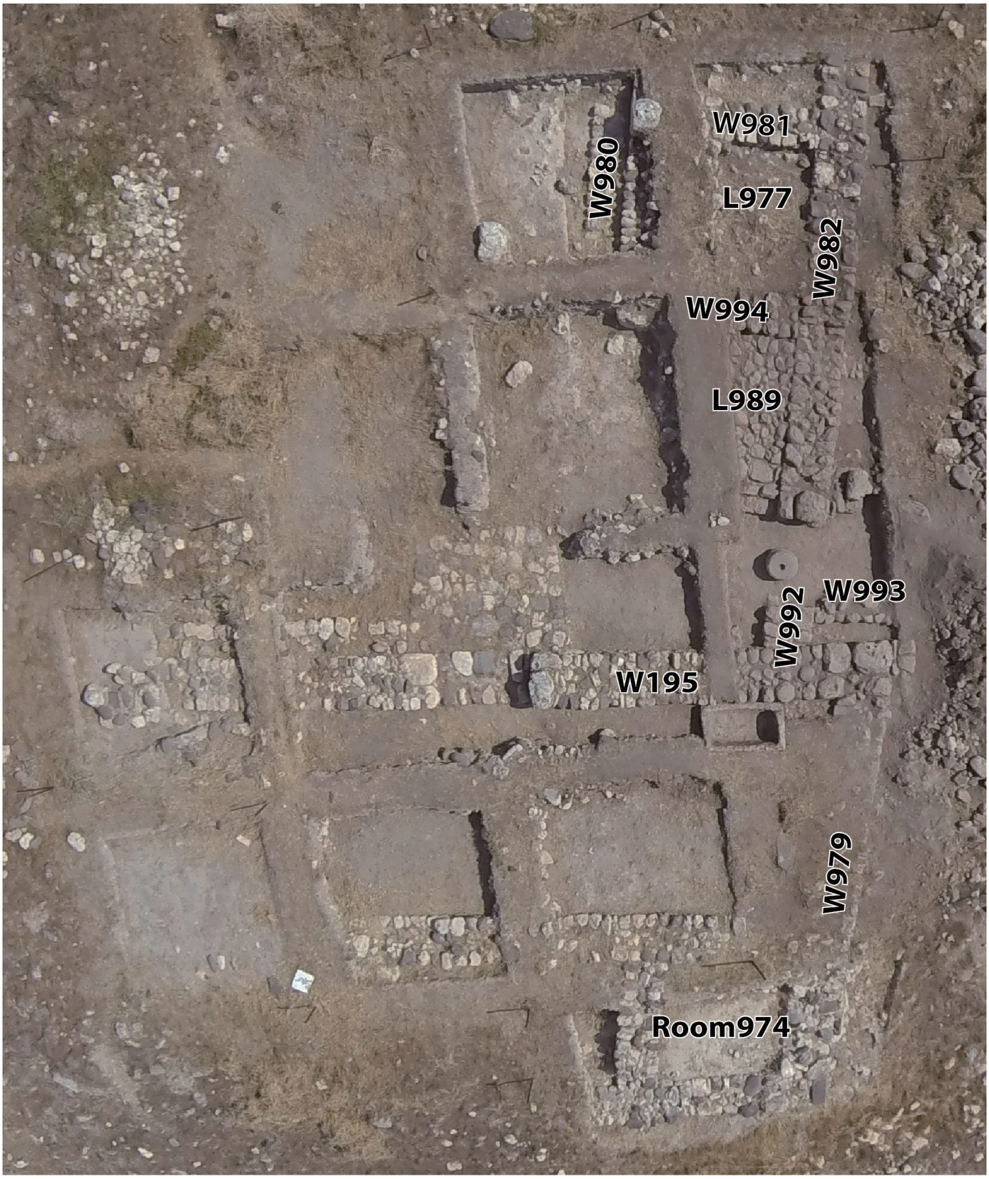
W981
W980
L977
W982
W994
L989
W993
W992
W195
W979
Room974

Fig. 4: Eastern side of the building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC, looking north. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

3.2 Eastern side (Fig. 4)

Approximately 15 m north of Room 974, we excavated the eastern enclosing wall (W982) of the complex. This wall and a perpendicular transverse wall (W981) created another room (L977). A well-built stairway (W980) probably allowed access to this room from the west.

Two segments of the eastern enclosing wall of the building complex are not on a single continuous line (W979, W982). The two walls created an opening (width 2.5 m) which probably served as an entrance to the complex. In the centre of this opening we discovered a cylindrical stone (diam. c. 0.6 m, height c. 0.4 m) that has a rounded carved hole at the centre of its upper side (diam. c. 0.14 m, depth c. 0.15 m). Since the stone seems to have been in secondary use, its function remains unclear. At the south end of the opening, W979 forms a corner with a somewhat perpendicular wall (W195). The entrance was narrowed by a wall (W992) attached to W195. A thin element (W993), probably drainage, was attached to W992. If this was a drain, it served to direct water away from the courtyard of the complex. South of W994 was a paved space (L989), which was probably accessed through shallow stairs from the south.[18]

3.3 Southern wall (Fig. 5)

In the middle part of the southern edge of the crest of the mound (squares D5e1, D5e2), we excavated parts of two parallel walls (W2034 and W2021; both width c. 1 m) that are the southernmost enclosing walls of the complex. Another segment of wall (W2020; width 0.6 m) was attached to W2021 from inside.

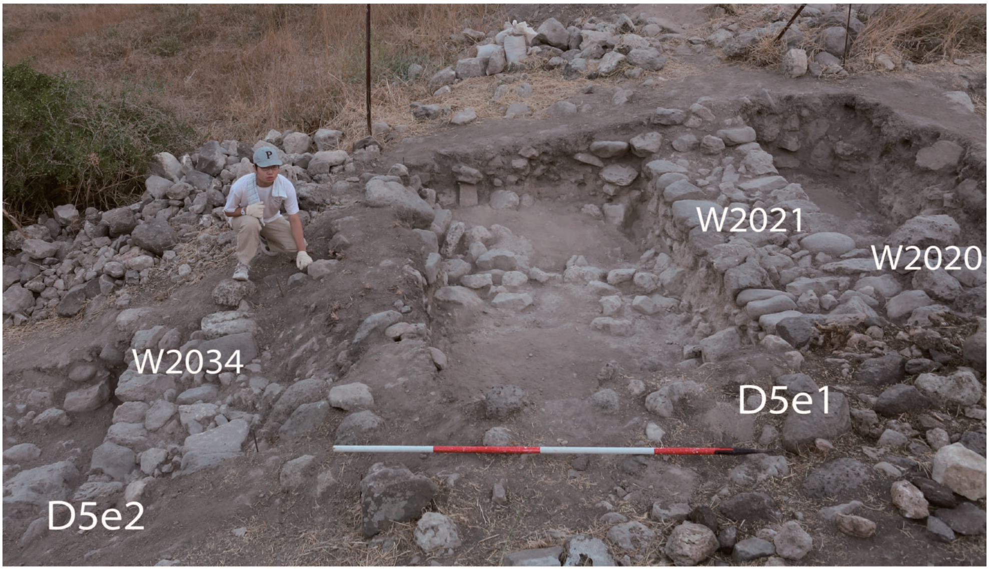

Fig. 4: Southern wall of the building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC, looking west. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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[18] A similar type of stone was found in Tell en-Naṣbeh; see McCown 1947: pl. 80: 3, 4; Zorn 2003: 432, fig. 5. Zorn 2003: 431-432 assumed that it was originally a stone basin that was later reused to raise the mouth of a cistern which he dated to the Neo-Babylonian period.

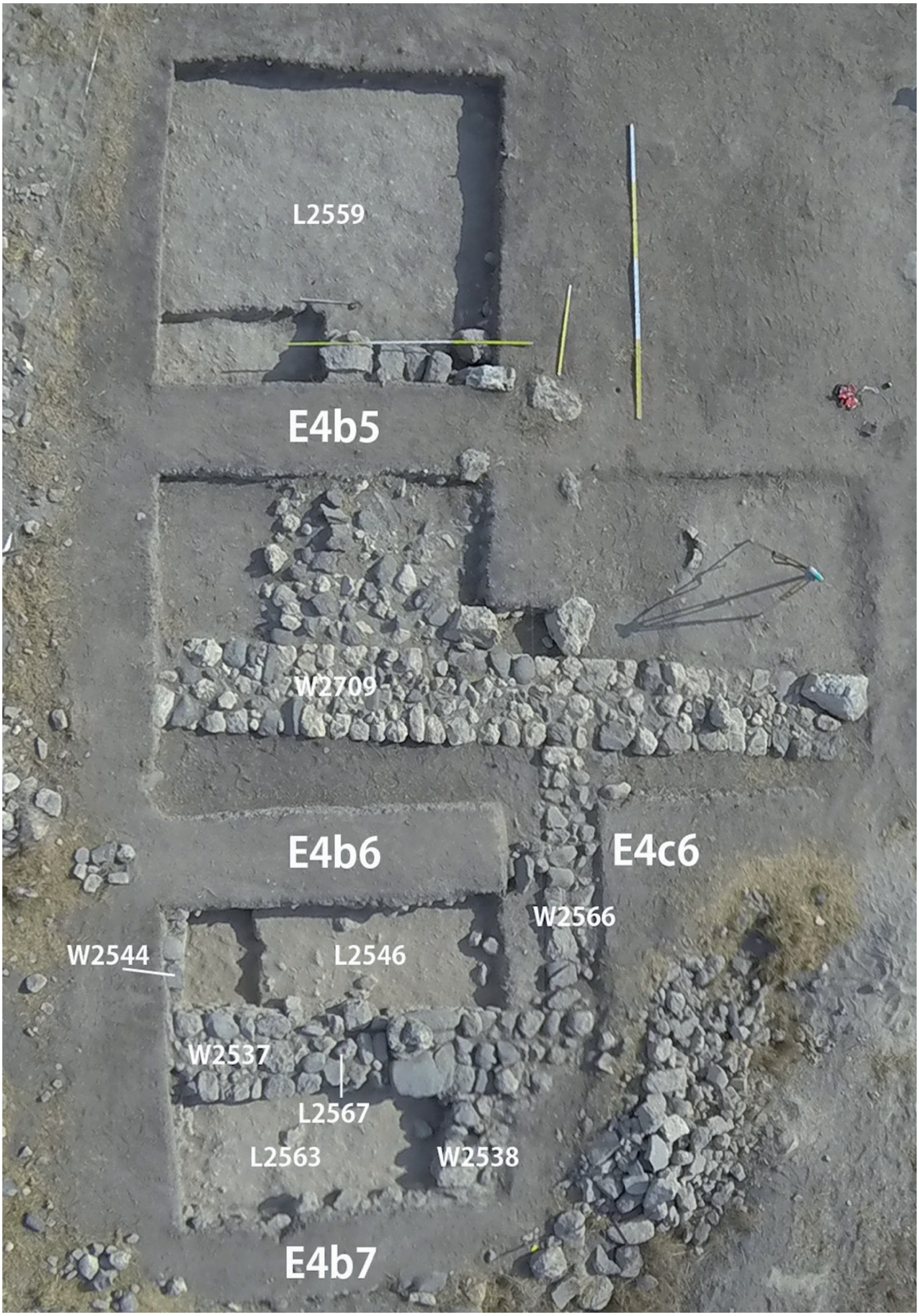
L2559
E4b5
W2709
E4b6
E4c6
W2566
W2544
L2546
W2537
L2567
L2563
W2538
E4b7

Fig. 6: Possible northwestern corner of the building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC, looking north. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

3.4 Possible northeastern corner (Fig. 6)

In the north-eastern part of the crest of the mound, we unearthed a wall (W2709; width c. 1 m) running in an east-west direction. This wall might have served as an extended pier that protruded out of the eastern enclosing wall of the complex, since it ended with a large stone at the eastern edge of the crest of the mound.

It seems that W2566 (width over 1 m) was part of the eastern enclosing wall of the building complex. If so, W2566 and W2709 form the northeastern corner of the complex, and the size of the complex would be c. 55 × 35 m.

In a wall (W2537) parallel to W2709, we discovered an opening (L2567; width 1.25 m) that allowed access between the northern and southern spaces (L2546, L2563). The opening was sealed with stones during the later occupation phase.

3.5 Southwestern side (Fig. 7)

In the southwestern part of the mound's crest, we excavated an extension of the western enclosing walls, running in a northeast-southwest direction. Both W151 (width c. 1 m) and W2042 were constructed on bedrock.

We excavated a rock-cut installation (L2066) immediately to the east of W2042. Inside this installation, we unearthed a number of restorable Iron IIA–B pottery sherds, including three nearly complete cooking pots and a complete dipper juglet. This installation was demolished by the construction of W2042.

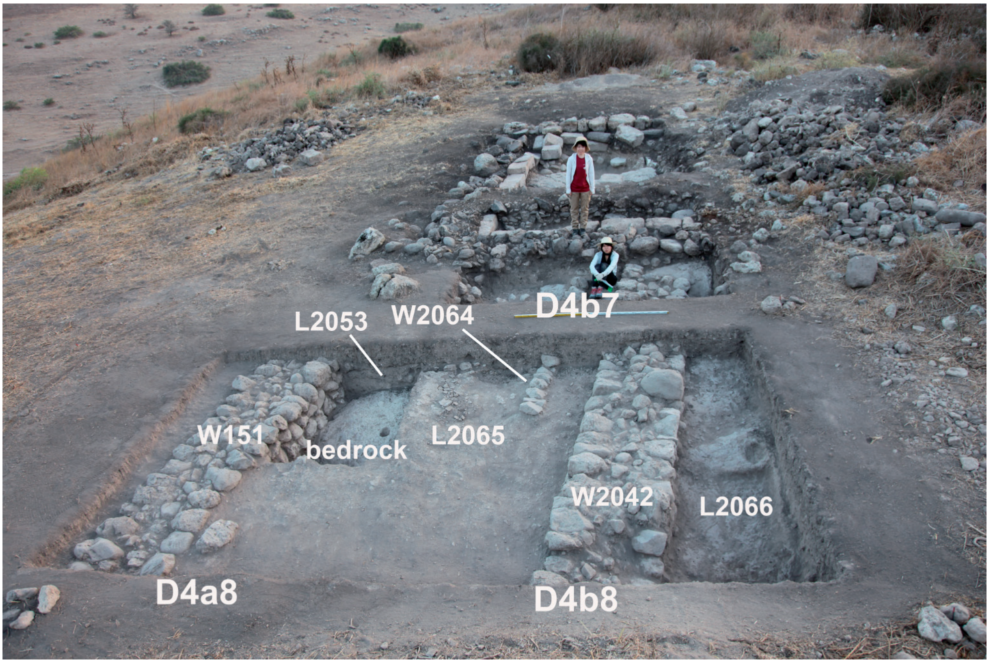

Fig. 7: Southwestern side of the building complex dating to the Iron Age IIC, looking north. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

4. Stepped plaster installation (Fig. 8)

In the middle of the southern part of the crest of the mound, we excavated a stepped, plastered installation (L2005; preserved height c. 0.6 m, preserved width 2.2 m). The structure's plaster also partly covered the southern face of a stone wall (W104) dating to the late Iron Age. The steps descended toward the southwest. We excavated the core of the steps in a sounding (0.5 × 0.5 m) that cut under the plaster.

At the eastern part of the plastered room, a stone wall (W2035; levels 31.68–31.73 m) running north-south was unearthed. We could not detect the southern and western walls of the plastered room. W2035 was superimposed by another wall (W2027) dating possibly to the Roman period.

The function of this stepped plaster installation cannot be determined since it has not been securely dated. If the installation was constructed during the late Iron Age, it may have served as a part of a ceremonial bathroom.[19] On the other hand, some of our team members consider this installation to be a ritual bath (*miqveh*) from the early Roman period.[20] If the former was the case, the late Iron Age building complex at Tel Rekhesh had at least two bathrooms: one at the southeastern corner and one close to the central part.

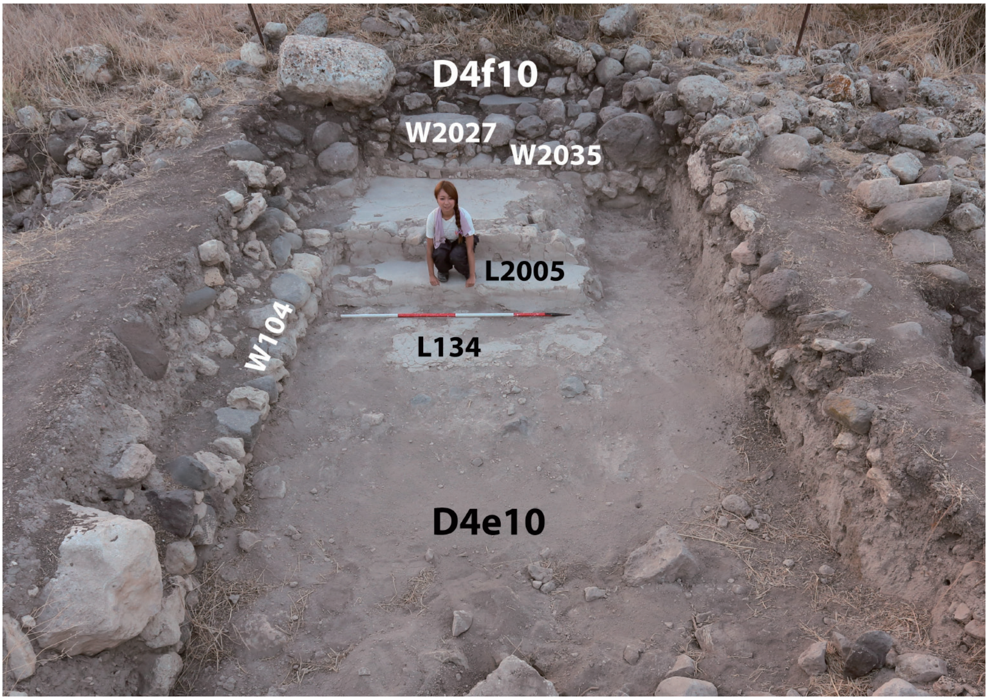

Fig. 8: Plaster installation, looking east. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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[19] Such a bathroom is usually located immediately inside of the enclosing wall of the building, probably for reasons of drainage. The plaster installation seems to be located somewhat far from the enclosing wall, which might indicate a different function for this installation.

[20] Hasegawa et al. 2020a: 119-120; 2020b. For the Roman period at Tel Rekhesh, see Aviam et al. 2019.

5. The function of the building complex

Though we have not excavated the courtyard itself, the exposed plan of the building complex reminds us of the so-called "courtyard structure" of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period (Fig. 9).[21] A courtyard structure has a courtyard at the centre surrounded by a series of rooms.[22] In addition to the plan, the following facilities are also common in Assyrian and Babylonian residences:

> a) Small corner-rooms designated as "bathrooms" adjacent to main reception halls in private and public courtyard structures have been uncovered from the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, such as at Arslan Tash and Megiddo,[23] and possibly at Ayyelet Ha-Shahar.[24] A similar bathroom was also discovered within an Assyrian structure near Tel Ashdod.[25]

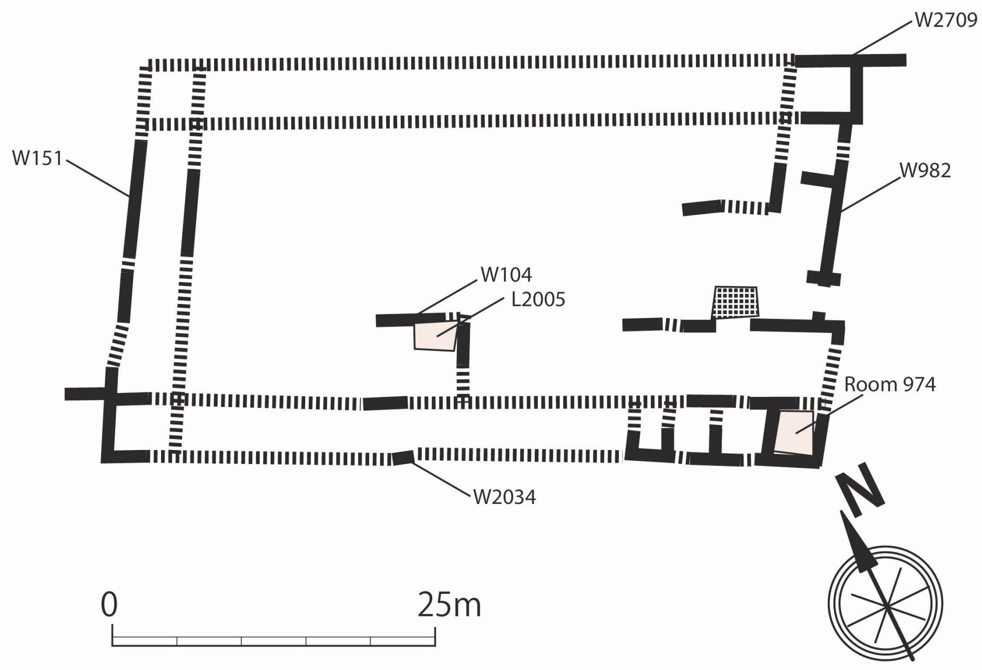

Fig. 9: Reconstruction of the Iron Age IIC building complex at Tel Rekhesh. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

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[21] For Neo-Assyrian royal buildings, see Kertai 2005.

[22] Amiran and Dunayevsky 1958; Reich 1992.

[23] Lamon and Shipton 1939: 71.

[24] Kletter and Zwickel 2006: 155-156. There were two Assyrian residences at Megiddo (Buildings 1052 and 1369; see below) and each of the two seems to have had a bathroom (Lamon and Shipton 1939: 71).

[25] Kogan-Zehavi 2006.

b) Drainage systems are found in residences from this period at Megiddo[26] and Hazor[27] and seem to be an essential feature in this type of structure for keeping the courtyard dry.

c) Revetment walls are also seen in such structures, for example at Megiddo.[28]

It may be the case that the late Iron Age building complex discovered at Tel Rekhesh functioned as an administrative centre during the period of Assyrian and Babylonian rule. From different locations within the site we discovered several items, such as a bronze fibula[29] and two Scytho-Iranian arrowheads (Fig. 10).[30] These may indicate that in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE the inhabitants of the site came from Mesopotamia or at least had a close relationship with the region.

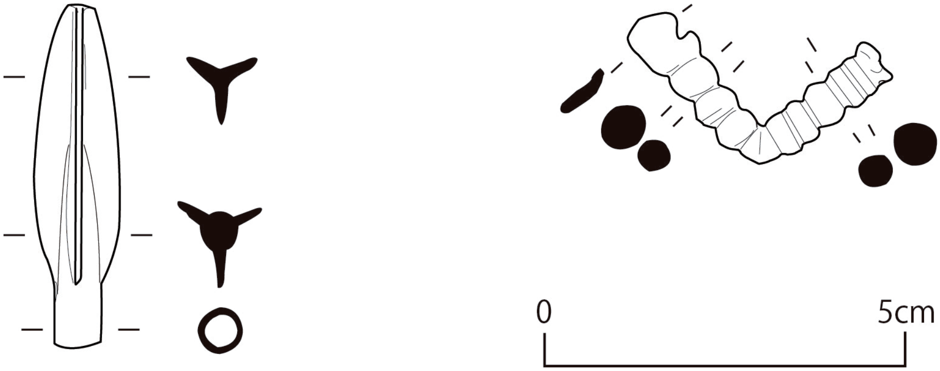

Fig. 10: A Scytho-Iranian arrowhead (left) and a fibula (right) dating to the Iron Age IIC. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

The major administrative centre of this region during this period was located at Tel Megiddo situated c. 27.5 kilometres west of Tel Rekhesh. Tel Megiddo was the capital of the Assyrian province Magiddû in the late eighth century BCE and at least two residences from this period (probably for the Assyrian governor) have been discovered at the site (Buildings 1052 and 1369).[31] The building complex found at Tel Rekhesh resembles one of the residences (Building 1052) at Megiddo in plan.[32]

It is clear that Magiddû, located at the western fringe of the fertile Jezreel Valley, was a strategically important province for the western part of the Assyrian Empire. This view is corroborated by the fact that Issi-Adad-anenu, the governor of Magiddû, held the prestigious office of the year eponym of the Assyrian Empire in 679 BCE.[33]

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[26] Lamon and Shipton 1939: 71.

[27] Yadin et al. 1958: 48.

[28] Lamon and Shipton 1939: 71.

[29] Cf. Pedde 2000: 266; Dugaw et al. 2020; Yahalom-Mack et al. 2020.

[30] For Scytho-Iranian arrowheads see Hellmuth-Kramberger 2016: 28-33. This type of arrowhead was also unearthed at Tell en-Naṣbeh, from a stratum dated to the sixth century BCE by Zorn 2003: 439-440. Cf. Stern 2001: 531-532.

[31] Franklin 2018: 193-194.

[32] The size of the complex at Tel Rekhesh is larger than that of Building 1052 (c. 37.5 × 24.0 m) and 1369 (c. 37.6 × max. 30.0 m) respectively, but it should be noted that these two residences were connected: Lamon and Shipton 1939: 71.

The exact relationship between the building complex at Tel Rekhesh and the provincial capital at Megiddo cannot be determined with currently available sources. The distance from Megiddo to Dor, probably the main port of the province of Megiddo, and to Samaria (Samerīna), the capital of another Assyrian province are c. 25.5 km and c. 34.0 km respectively.[34] Considering the distance from the capital as well as the size of the site, it seems logical to assume that Tel Rekhesh served as a satellite of the capital of the province Magiddû, where a high-class officer second to the governor resided. It is also possible that Tel Rekhesh served (also) as an outpost of a Mesopotamian empire, such as Riblah and Mizpah.[35] Similar, isolated large buildings during this period were excavated at Hazor[36] and at Ayyelet Ha-Shahar,[37] both c. 60 km from Megiddo. These sites dominated a significant route. Tel Rekhesh was located on the Nahal Tavor, which was likely a strategic route, if not a trunk road, connecting the Jezreel Valley and Jordan Valley in antiquity. It bore particular importance in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE when two regional powers, first Assyria and Egypt and then Egypt and Babylonia, were in conflict with each other. Zertal also reports similar administrative complexes in Samaria province, ten to twenty-five kilometres from Samaria,[38] which may have had a function similar to that of the building complex at Tel Rekhesh.

6. Date of the building complex

Determining the precise date of the Iron Age IIC strata/finds in the southern Levant is notoriously difficult. This also holds true in the territory of Judah, which has drawn much more scholarly attention. Scholars have made desperate efforts to more accurately date finds from the related strata. Speaking about this difficulty in his monograph on Judah in the Neo-Babylonian period, Faust states "Unfortunately, as is widely known, no material culture specific to the [Neo-]Babylonian period has yet been identified, and so the debate seems unresolved."[39] This lack of information is even more serious in the northern part of the southern Levant, and only limited efforts have been made so far to collect archaeological materials from this period.[40]

Excavators of the late Iron Age buildings in the southern Levant have repeatedly expressed the difficulty in obtaining precise dates for their finds.[41] The building complex from Tel Rekhesh joins the list of such buildings. The structure was covered only by topsoil and

[33] Millard 1994: 61.

[34] I do not count Dor as an Assyrian province. For the reasons to exclude Dor as a separate province, see Radner 2006: 66, no. 81.

[35] Vanderhooft 2003: 244-245.

[36] Yadin *et al*. 1958: 63.

[37] Reich 1975; Kletter and Zwickel 2006.

[38] Zertal 2013: 387-390.

[39] Faust 2012: 3. Note that Faust 2012: 11-16 describes the difficulty in identifying the sixth century BCE strata at length. A similar view is expressed by Vanderhooft 2003: 254-255 and Zorn 2003: 414-416. It is a pity that Faust did not attempt to establish the assemblage of the *fossiles directeurs* (type fossils) of this period in his monograph in which he made great efforts to refute the "continuity theory."

[40] See, e.g., Faust 2012: 62; 2018: 29-33.

[41] Lamon and Shipton 1939: 83; Yadin et al. 1958: 53-54; Yadin 1972: 194; Kletter and Zwickel 2006: 168.

the pottery found above the floor level is usually quite mixed. The floor itself was detected in only a few places.[42]

Only the *terminus post quem* of the building can be securely established. The pottery assemblage retrieved from a rock-cut installation under the packed earth floor of the south-western part of the complex is dated to Iron Age IIA–IIB. The pottery was intentionally thrown into the rock-cut installation, possibly when the complex was being built.

Due to the limited excavation area, the overall plan of the complex at Tel Rekhesh is not available. As stated above, the remaining features of the complex exhibit some resemblance to Assyrian and Babylonian court structure, but these cannot provide decisive evidence for dating the complex either to the Assyrian or to the Neo-Babylonian period. David Kertai points to the affinity between most of the buildings in the southern Levant previously dated to the Assyrian period (such as the Lachish Residency; Building 3002 at Hazor; Buildings 1052 and 1369 at Megiddo and the Ayyelet Ha-Shahar building) and the Babylonian architectural tradition.[43] Although Kertai is cautious about assigning precise dates to these buildings,[44] it is plausible, from this viewpoint, to date the construction of some of the buildings to the sixth century BCE.

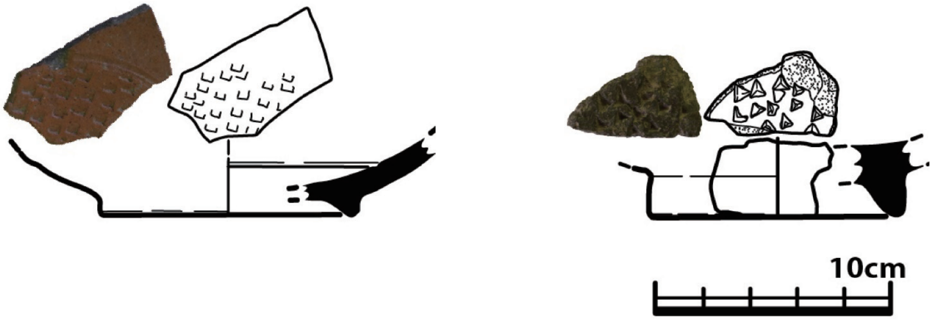

Fig. 11: Fragments of two wedge-decorated bowls dating to the Iron Age IIC. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

As briefly shown above, finds from various areas of the mound, mostly from topsoil, demonstrate the presence of people at Tel Rekhesh who were either from Mesopotamia or who had a close relationship to that region. These finds can be dated to the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. A bronze fibula is typologically dated to the end of the seventh century BCE, and one of the Scytho-Iranian arrowheads is dated to the late seventh to early sixth centuries BCE. Several sherds of wedge-decorated bowls, considered to be a *fossile directeur* (type fossil) of the sixth century BCE by some scholars, were also unearthed at Tel Rekhesh (Fig. 11).[45] A carinated "Assyrian" bowl with a petal decoration, found by a local at the site long before the excavation began, may also join this series of finds (Fig. 12).[46]

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[42] Since I have encountered quite a few similar descriptions of the "elusive" nature of relevant buildings (see references in the previous footnote), I am starting to think that this situation itself could be counted as one of the characteristics of the buildings of this period.

[43] Kertai 2018: 150-156.

[44] Kertai 2018: 153.

[45] Zertal 2003: 397-398; Zorn 2003: 441.

[46] Hestrin and Stern 1973. For the date of this type of bowl, see Na'aman and Thareani-Sussely 2006; Singer-Avitz 2007.

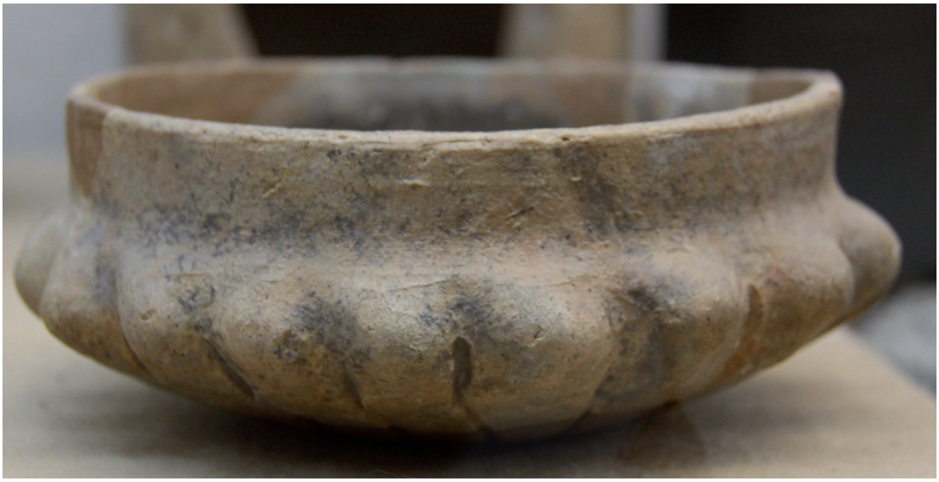

Fig. 12: Carinated “Assyrian” bowl dating to the Iron Age IIC. © The Tel Rekhesh Project.

It is not conceivable that the Assyrians built such a large building complex at the end of the seventh century BCE, a time when the empire was approaching its demise in 609 BCE and the Levant had been taken over by Egypt a decade before. Hence, on the basis of the probable dates of the finds, it seems more logical to ascribe the construction of the complex at Tel Rekhesh to Babylonians in the early sixth century BCE. Yet, since those finds were not discovered in direct relationship with the building complex itself, it is also possible that Assyrians built the complex in the late seventh century BCE in preparation for the conflict with Egypt, and the Babylonians later reused it in the sixth century BCE.

Finds from the complex may also show that it continued to be used into the fifth century BCE, namely the early Achaemenid period, which is again a common feature of many of the late Iron Age buildings unearthed in the southern Levant.[47]

7. Conclusions

Now we will return to the question raised at the beginning of this paper: Did the Babylonians establish an administrative system in the Levant? Unfortunately, archaeological data from Tel Rekhesh cannot offer an unequivocal answer, since the date of the late Iron Age complex cannot be securely determined. However, in either case, the late Iron Age building complex at Tel Rekhesh seems to provide evidence that counters Zorn and Faust’s view that the Babylonians had little interest in the Levant.

a) If the complex was built under the Assyrian hegemony, it seems that the Babylonians took over the administrative centre and made use of it.

b) On the other hand, if the complex was built during the Neo-Babylonian period, that would indicate that the Babylonians were interested enough in the Levant to build a new administrative centre at Tel Rekhesh.

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[47] Zertal 2003: 395-399.

Under the current circumstances, it is perhaps more prudent not to draw general conclusions about Babylonian policy on controlling its conquered regions. To discuss the administrative policy of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, it is absolutely necessary to collect further data that can be dated to the sixth century BCE with certainty. This can be done by obtaining more radiocarbon data or using OSL, and of course by cautious excavation of the relevant strata. I hope this paper will provide an incentive for further studies on this subject, adding further pieces to the puzzle depicting the mechanism of power of the early Near Eastern empires.

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Provincial control in the eastern reaches of the Assyrian Empire

A view from Yasin Tepe, Iraqi Kurdistan

1. Introduction

The Neo-Assyrian Empire (9th-7th centuries BCE) was the first “imperial” realm the ancient Near East had ever seen. Its maximum extent spread from modern-day western Iran to the Mediterranean coast.[2] From the 19th century CE onwards, this empire has been mainly studied both through the analysis of cuneiform texts and archaeological data. Because of the current political situation in the Middle East, it is not always easy to find a site accessible to archaeological fieldwork. However, during the past decade when work in Syria and Yemen, for example, has become virtually non-existent, Iraqi Kurdistan has seen a large number of archaeological projects take up fieldwork, including many headed by scholars from abroad.[3]

This paper serves as a summary of what we have achieved since 2015 in the course of its archaeological investigation at Yasin Tepe (Gird-i Yāsīn Tepe; 35° 21′ 35″ N, 45° 38′ 60″ E), located in the southern part of Slemani (or Sulaymaniyah) Governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.[4]

A key concern for the team investigating Yasin Tepe is to understand the socio-historical situation of the border settlements at the fringe of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Although archaeological investigation within the imperial provinces has advanced significantly over recent

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[1] The Yasin Tepe Archaeological Project (YAP) is deeply grateful to its partners in the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdistan Regional Government (Erbil), especially Director-General Kak Kaifi M. Ali and his predecessor, Kak Abubakir O. Zainaddin. In the Slemani Governorate, Kak Kamal Rasheed Raheem, Director of the Slemani Directorate of Antiquities, and Kak Hashim Hama Abudullah, Director of the Slemani Museum, have been extremely supportive throughout the project. We also thank the staff members of both the Directorate and the Museum, including Kak Sami Jamil, and Kak Rawa K. Salih who were our representatives at Yasin Tepe. At the University of Sulaimani, Dr Kozad M. Ahmad, Dr Dlshad A. Marf, and Kak Othman T. Fattah have been helpful in many ways. The YAP has been supported by scholars from the universities of Chubu, Tsukuba and Kokushikan, as well as the Lebanese University. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the support of Prof. emeritus Dr Akira Tsuneki, Prof. Dr Shigeo Yamada, Prof. Hirotoshi Numoto, and Prof. Dr Jeanine Abdul Massih. We also wish to express our gratitude to all the YAP team members for their hard and devoted work in the field. The YAP was financially supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) in the form of KAKENHI (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research A & B; Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas, Grant nos. 24101002, 2630007, 16H01948, 17H02412, 18H00743, and 18H05445), with further financial support from Chubu University Grant A (2018).

[2] E.g., Grayson 1982; Oates 1991; Radner 2015: 4-5; Liverani 2017.

[3] For these projects, see Kopanias et al. 2015; Kopanias and MacGinnis 2016; Ur 2017.

[4] See also Directorate General of Antiquities of Iraq 1970: 334 no. 79; 1975–76: map 86 no. 34.

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decades in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, and Israel,[5] the bulk of the imperial territory has still not been investigated for a range of political and social reasons, and as a result our archaeological understanding of the pattern of Assyrian provincial control is still at an early stage.

Within Iraqi Kurdistan, we are presented with the rare opportunity to consider the hitherto unknown eastern border region along the western Zagros mountains, and in our case, through the testimony of Yasin Tepe, one of the largest tell-type sites in the region. The Slemani Governorate, where the site is located, lies on the Iraqi border with Iran and is well known for its mountainous landscape. From the 1980s to 2009, almost no archaeological fieldwork was conducted there for political reasons. Yasin Tepe lies ca. 40 km from the Iraq-Iran border as the crow flies. It has long been assumed to have been one of the most important centres of the imperial eastern fringe, and our new investigation of the Iron Age occupation there obtained actual proof for this hypothesis. This paper presents both a summary of the fieldwork undertaken at the site between 2016 and 2018, with some mention of the 2019 work, as well as an interpretation of the results for our understanding of Yasin Tepe's role in the eastern part of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

2. The Shahrizor Plain

Yasin Tepe is located in the western part of the Shahrizor plain, a large, fertile region located ca. 30 km to the southeast of the city of Slemani (Fig. 1). The plain measures ca. 40 km east-west and ca. 20 km north-south. It is one of the major crossroads of traffic in the central western Zagros.[6] To the northwest, the plain turns into a broad valley between the Azmar and Pīr-a Magrun mountains to the east, and the Beranan mountains to the west. This valley continues north to the Raniya (or Rania) plain, parts of which are today covered by the Dokān dam lake. To the south, we pass the Darband-i Khān dam lake and advance into the valley of the Sīrwan river. The river later changes its name to become the Diyālā and flows southwards to form a major traffic route which connects the Baghdad region and the Shahrizor.[7] To the east of the Shahrizor, passing though the ranges of the Hewrāmān mountains, we reach the Iranian Zagros before heading to the Iranian highlands. Finally, to the west, several mountain passes in the Baranan and Qara Dagh mountains lead to the plain of Kirkuk, and from there to the Tigris valley.

The Shahrizor Survey Project (SSP), which commenced in 2009,[8] surveyed the major parts of the plain by employing a range of methods: archaeological, historical and palaeoenvironmental.[9] Preliminary results from the first phase of the project showed that 13 of the 30 sites surveyed had Iron Age (or Neo-Assyrian) occupations,[10] a level of settlement density that would not be matched again until the Sasanian and Islamic periods. Already the previous

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[5] Cf. most recently the contributions in MacGinnis et al. 2016; Aster and Faust 2018; Tyson and Herrmann 2018.

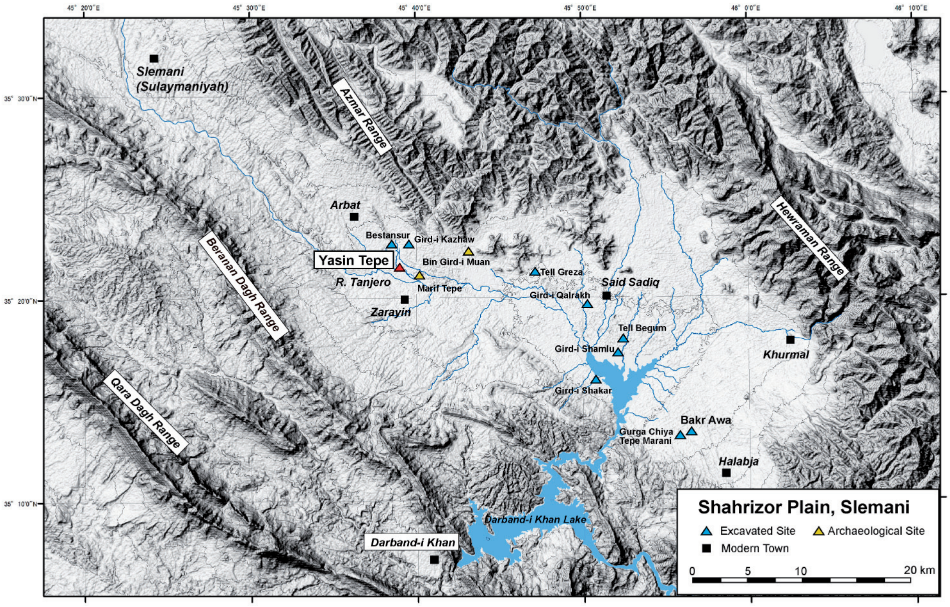
[6] Altaweel et al. 2012: 2-4.

[7] Safar 1974: 195-196, pl. XXXII; Postgate 1984: 150-151.

[8] Started by Prof. Dr Peter Miglus, the SSP is now led by Dr Simone Mühl (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), with participating researchers from Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Iraqi Kurdistan: Altaweel et al. 2012: 1; 2016; Mühl and Fassbinder 2016; Nieuwenhuyse et al. 2016: 258; Mühl et al. 2018. The SSP has identified 295 sites by remote sensing and visited 80 sites for intensive survey: Nieuwenhuyse et al. 2016: 258. Among those is Yasin Tepe, which was assigned the reference SSP-2.

[9] Mühl 2010; Altaweel et al. 2012.

[10] Altaweel et al. 2012: 19, fig. 6; 2016: 347.


45° 20'0"E
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45° 50'0"E
46° 0'0"E
46° 10'0"E
35° 30'0"N
35° 20'0"N
35° 10'0"N
Slemani (Sulaymaniyah)
Azmar Range
Arbat
Bestansur
Gird-i Kazhaw
Bin Gird-i Muan
Yasin Tepe
R. Tanjero
Marif Tepe
Zarayin
Beranan Dagh Range
Qara Dagh Range
Tell Greza
Said Sadiq
Gird-i Qalrakh
Tell Begum
Gird-i Shamlu
Gird-i Shakar
Hewraman Range
Khurmal
Bakr Awa
Gurga Chiya
Tepe Marani
Halabja
Darband-i Khan Lake
Darband-i Khan
Shahrizor Plain, Slemani
Excavated Site
Archaeological Site
Modern Town
0
5
10
20 km

Fig. 1: The Shahrizor Plain and the location of Yasin Tepe (YAP Archive).

survey undertaken by the Iraqi Directorate General of Antiquities (in the following, DGA) had indicated that in the Shahrizor, the Iron Age was the most densely settled period, with 93 out of 111 survey sites occupied. Although that exact number is almost certainly incorrect, as has since been pointed out,[11] the Iron Age was without doubt one of the most prosperous periods in the settlement history of the Shahrizor plain.

There are two major tell-type sites in the Shahrizor of a size of more than 30–40 ha. The first is Bakr Awa (Bakr Āwā) in the southeast of the plain, ca. 7 km northwest of Halabja, and the other is Yasin Tepe in the northwest of the plain, ca. 10 km southeast of Arbāt (Fig. 1). The first site was first investigated in the 1960s by the Iraqi DGA, and since 2010 further investigations have been conducted by Peter Miglus of Heidelberg University.[12]

Despite the promising results of the surveys, only a few of the other sites with evidence of Iron Age occupations have been investigated through excavations: Gird-i Kāzhaw,[13] Bestansūr,[14] and Gird-i Qalrakh.[15] This is where the project of Yasin Tepe is able to contribute, especially for a better understanding of Iron Age material culture and the broader historical importance of the Shahrizor.[16]

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[11] Altaweel et al. 2016: 347.

[12] Miglus et al. 2011; 2013; Miglus 2016.

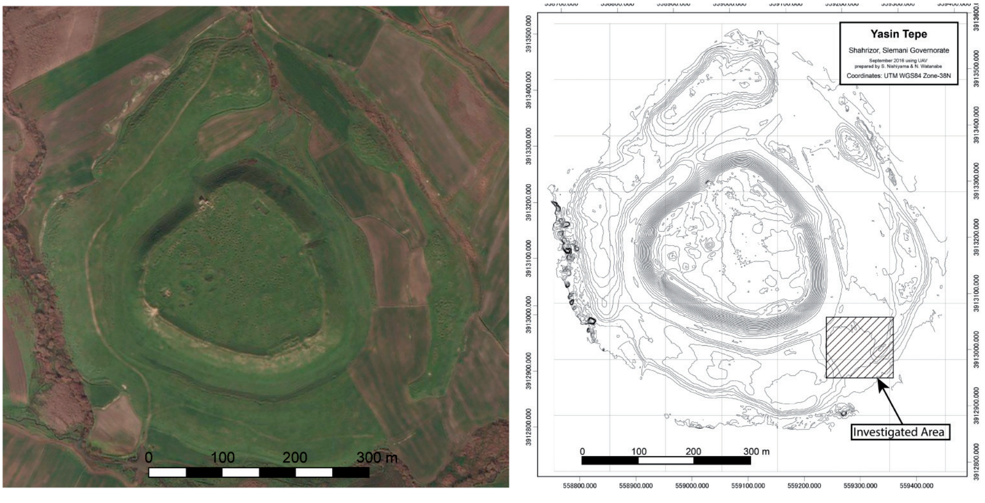
[13] Tamm et al. 2018: 127-130.

[14] Personal communication, Dr Lisa Cooper, University of British Columbia; see Cooper 2017; Cooper and Welton 2019.

[15] Personal communication, Prof. Dr Dirk Wicke, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main.

[16] Within the territory of the Slemani Governorate, there are also other expeditions focusing on the Iron Age and post-Iron Age occupation: the Peshdar Plain Project (excavating the Dinka Settlement Complex, which includes Gird-i Bāzār and Qalat-i Dinka) led by Prof. Dr Karen Radner, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München: Radner et al. 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; the Darband-i Rania Archaeological Project (excavating Qalatga Darband, Usu Aska and Murad Rasū) led by Dr John MacGinnis of the British Museum: MacGinnis et al. 2020; the Grd-i Tle excavations led by Dr Tamás Dezső, Eötvös Loránd University: Kalla and Dezső 2019; and the Gird-i Gulak excavations led by Dr Tim Skuldbøl, University of Copenhagen: Colantoni et al. 2018.

On the subject of Iron Age settlements in the Shahrizor, mention must be made of the issue of the city of Dūr-Aššur. The Shahrizor was firmly under Assyrian control by the late 9th century BCE and was the core of the province of Zamua (or Mazamua).[17] The city of Dūr-Aššur is first mentioned in the royal annals of Ashurnasirpal II (883−859 BCE);[18] its former name is given as Atlila, said to have once been ruled by a Babylonian king called Sibir (usually assumed to be Simbar-Šipak, late 11th century BCE). The Assyrian royal inscriptions inform us that, before the imposition of Assyrian control, there were many local kingdoms,[19] although none of these has yet been identified archaeologically. Since Ephraim Speiser first connected Dūr-Aššur with the mound of Bakr Awa,[20] this proposal has been widely followed.[21] However, as the excavations carried out by an Iraqi team in the 1960s at Bakr Awa were not able to identify any significant Iron Age occupation,[22] Mario Liverani emphasized that the identification with Bakr Awa may not be justified,[23] and Peter Miglus, the present excavator of Bakr Awa, freely conceded that there is as of yet no archaeological evidence to confirm the equation.[24] The evidence on which the equation was based was purely textual: the so-called "Zamua Itinerary" suggests that around three days of marching was required to reach Dūr-Aššur from Arrakdi,[25] itself assumed to be in the vicinity of the modern city of Slemani.[26] This would point to a southeastern location in the Shahrizor, where Bakr Awa is the only major


0
100
200
300 m
Yasin Tepe
Shahrizor, Slemani Governorate
September 2016 using UAV
prepared by S. Nishiyama & N. Watanabe
Coordinates: UTM WGS84 Zone-38N
Investigated Area
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200
300 m
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559000.000
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559300.000
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3913500.000
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3912800.000

(a) (b)

Fig. 2: (a): Satellite photo of Yasin Tepe (after Bing Maps); (b): Topographic plan of Yasin Tepe (YAP Archive).

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[17] Liverani 1992: 45-45; Medvedskaya 2000; Altaweel et al. 2012: 12-15; Radner 2017b; Yamada 2020.

[18] Grayson 1991: A.0.101.1 ii 84b-86a; cf. Unger 1938.

[19] Altaweel et al. 2012: 12-13; Radner 2017b; Yamada 2020.

[20] Speiser 1928: 13-14, 28.

[21] E.g. Klengel 1966: 366, n. 93; Brinkman 1968: 154, n. 930; more recently Altaweel et al. 2016: 347.

[22] Al-Husaini 1962; Madhloum 1965.

[23] Liverani 1992: 56.

[24] Miglus et al. 2013: 47.

[25] Levine 1989: 82.

[26] Radner 2017a: 428.

urban settlement. The distance between Slemani and Bakr Awa is ca. 60 km as the crow flies, while the distance from Slemani to Yasin Tepe is ca. 30 km – therefore, seemingly, too short a distance if Dūr-Aššur is Yasin Tepe. Recently, however, and interestingly, Karen Radner has proposed Yasin Tepe as an alternative candidate for Dūr-Aššur.[27]

In any case, the Assyrian province of Zamua (or Mazamua) represented the core region among the other provinces in the imperial eastern fringe, and it remained so until the Empire's fall. The capital city of the province is still unknown, but it is believed to be in the Shahrizor, and Dūr-Aššur along with Arrakdi are assumed to be the two major cities of the province.[28] Clearly, identifying the location of Dūr-Aššur, with its important regional status before the advance of the Assyrians when it was called Atlila, is important in our understanding of the imperial control of the eastern fringe of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

3. Yasin Tepe

The archaeological site of Yasin Tepe consists of two parts: the acropolis mound and the so-called "lower town," which is the low-profile mound that surrounds the acropolis in a concentric manner (Fig. 2a). The acropolis measures ca. 350 × 340 m (ca. 10 ha), with a height of ca. 20 m above the surrounding plain, while the lower town measures ca. 700 × 630 m, and this brings the total size of the site to ca. 40 ha.

The distinguishing feature of the site is its easy access to water. The Tanjero river, which is the main perennial river in the Shahrizor, flows ca. 600 m southwest of the site. In addition, many modern channels, with headwaters at the spring of Bestansūr (see below), flow around the site, especially to the west and south of the mound. The abundance of water can make access to the site difficult, particularly during the winter time when it rains. The soil absorbs the water quickly and the ground soon becomes muddy. The Iraqi DGA team reports that in the summer of 1971 when the area surrounding the site was largely inundated, access was impossible and postponing the excavation was inevitable.[29] More recently, the SSP has commented on the fact that Yasin Tepe is accessible only during the dry season and cannot easily be reached until late summer.[30]

One of the main reasons for this abundance of water is the presence of a large perennial spring in the south of the modern village of Bestansūr, which is located ca. 2.5 km north of Yasin Tepe. Currently, the land around is cultivated with various agricultural products including wheat, okra, watermelon and rice (of the so-called "Kurdish" variety, a high-quality product). In addition, the villagers raise livestock requiring plenty of water, such as cattle and geese. Although we presently do not yet have data on the natural environment during the first half of the first millennium BCE, the general assumption is that the Iron Age environment will presumably have been quite similar to what it is now, especially since the spring of Bestansūr has probably been utilized since the Neolithic period.[31]

Concerning previous archaeological investigations at the site, unfortunately there is not much to mention. Yasin Tepe was first very briefly excavated by Ephraim Speiser during his trip to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1927 but during his one-day sounding, which was probably located in the northeastern part of acropolis, only Islamic-period potsherds were encountered.[32] Half a century later, in the summer of 1973, an Iraqi DGA team conducted excavations for a period of two months, focusing mainly on the acropolis.[33] They also undertook a preliminary sounding (5 × 10 m) somewhere in the northwestern part of the lower town, and at ca. 2 m in depth, the remains of a fortification wall and an Islamic-period tomb were encountered.[34] The excavators concluded that the mound of lower town represented a "deliberate defensive construction" of the Islamic period.[35] Subsequently, the team focused on the northeastern part of the acropolis, digging also at the "western" gate where a standing stone structure still remains.[36] A total of seven 10 × 10 m squares were opened. The excavators claimed to have probably found a palace with a large courtyard. In a room below floor level, a bronze cylindrical container was discovered that contained 69 gold dinar coins and two gold earrings. In the western gate, they identified so-called "Kurdish Ware" (which is usually attributed to the Ottoman period[37]), as well as several gold coins dated between A.H. 331 and A.H. 501.[38] This date may parallel the Abbasid, Fatimid, Samanid, and Buyid dynasties (10th-12th century CE).[39] The Iraqi team briefly returned to the site in 1978, but the results seem not to have been reported on in any detail.[40] After a further long hiatus, in 1999, a team from the Slemani Directorate of Antiquities conducted excavations in the northern part of the acropolis.[41] Digging was carried out in the northeastern and northwestern parts and identified Islamic-period occupation.[42] To sum up, past excavations focused mainly on the acropolis and there revealed a thick accumulation of Islamic-period remains overlaying the earlier strata.[43]

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[27] Radner 2017a: 428; 2017b: 212.

[28] Radner 2017b: 212-213.

[29] Hijara 1975: 276.

[30] Altaweel et al. 2012: 19. The area has a rainy season from October to May and the annual precipitation of the Shahrizor has been ca. 700–900 mm: Altaweel et al. 2012: 3.

[31] Matthews et al. 2016: 223.

Between 2009 and 2011, the SSP conducted an intensive survey of Yasin Tepe. The results have shown that the site included occupations dating from the Halaf period, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age (Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian), the Achaemenid and the Hellenistic/Parthian periods,[44] whereas Sasanian-period materials were identified at the nearby sites designated as SSP 4 and 5.[45] In addition, an off-site survey was conducted in the site's vicinity.[46] Our preliminary survey at the site in 2015 revealed occupations of the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Islamic periods. Therefore, Yasin Tepe seems to have a long occupational history spanning from the Neolithic to the Islamic period.

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[32] Speiser 1928: 11.

[33] Hijara 1975; Anonymous 1975.

[34] Hijara 1975: 278.

[35] Anonymous 1975: 67.

[36] We labelled it the "northwestern" gate. The Iraqi team mentions that this northwestern gate is ca. 5 m in height, describing "two guard rooms with vaulted roofs flank the entrance on the interior, and in front of the exterior of the gateway a wall extends from the north making access possible only along the wall from the south": Anonymous 1975: 67; cf. Hijara 1975: 279. The gate is constructed of limestone and mortar. Although the dating of the building is still uncertain, the construction method resembles that in use from the Late Sasanian to the Early Islamic periods; cf. Huff 1986.

[37] Cf. Altaweel et al. 2012: 3, Table 1: 27; Miglus et al. 2013: 70.

[38] Hijara 1975: 279-280.

[39] Anonymous 1975: 67. All of the excavated materials and records are said to be stored in Baghdad: personal communication, Mr Hashim Hama Abdullah, Slemani Museum.

[40] Anonymous 1979: 159. There, it is also stated that "in one place" the "excavations also penetrated Assyrian deposits," but further details are unknown.

[41] Ma'rouf 1999.

[42] The excavated finds and records are now kept in the Slemani Museum: personal communication, Mr Hashim Hama Abdullah, Slemani Museum.

[43] A similar situation may be observed with the excavation of Bakr Awa which identified some 4–5 m of Islamic period occupation on the acropolis: Miglus et al. 2013: 76-78.

[44] Altaweel et al. 2012: 22-23, 25-26.

Our new project at Yasin Tepe is called the Yasin Tepe Archaeological Project (YAP) and comprises scholars from Chubu, Tsukuba, and Kokushikan Universities. The new archaeological excavation of Yasin Tepe started in 2016, with preliminary work at the site commencing in 2015, when the YAP conducted a surface survey of the lower town and an UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) survey to create orthophotos.[47] Since 2017, the project has been led by Chubu University, working in collaboration with colleagues from Japan, Iraqi Kurdistan and Lebanon. To date, we have conducted three seasons of excavations in 2016, 2017 and 2019 and one season of geophysical and archaeological survey in 2018.

The YAP has three basic research aims:

1) to investigate the historical role of Yasin Tepe in the eastern imperial fringe by exploring particularly the Iron Age remains in the lower town;
2) to comprehend the chronological sequence of Yasin Tepe and its contribution to the regional sequence of the Shahrizor; and
3) to investigate the immediate vicinity (ca. 3 km in radius) of Yasin Tepe in an attempt to understand how the city was maintained by its rural environment.

In the case of (1), past excavations at Yasin Tepe were mainly focused on the acropolis and failed to reveal any evidence of Iron Age occupation. Our search for clues of the Iron Age occupation were therefore focused on the lower town, where we hypothesized the existence of domestic and workshop quarters as well as administrative sectors to support the elite-class buildings presumed to be on the acropolis. We assumed that the lower town holds the key to how the city was planned and organized. Moreover, there may have existed also in the lower town elite residences, as discovered in other excavations of Assyrian provincial cities, e.g., in southeastern Turkey Tušhan (modern Ziyaret Tepe)[48] and Sam'al (modern Zincirli).[49] While lower towns are often overlooked by archaeologists, with the acropoleis receiving greater attention since they arguably contain monumental building structures, a focus on the lower town of Yasin Tepe seemed therefore well suited for the achievement of our goals.

As for (2), as the results of the SSP and our preliminary survey inform us, Yasin Tepe has a long chronological sequence. Although our priority is the site's Iron Age occupation, we will also intend to investigate pre- and post-Iron Age occupations in order to establish the chronological sequence. This, we hope, will contribute to the establishment of a broader regional chronology for the Shahrizor, something which is still at a preliminary stage.

If the aim of (2) is to study the site in a diachronic manner, that of (3) is to observe the site synchronically. The SSP and our own survey have already established the existence of smaller settlements in the close vicinity of Yasin Tepe, with our preliminary investigations demonstrating that a number of these sites had been settled during the Iron Age. This prompts a discussion of how the immediate landscape of a large city was organized or utilized. In addition, by investigating the distribution of the area's various archaeological remains in the vicinity (not only settlements, but also canals, graveyards, fields and roads), it may be possible to re-construct the ancient landscape as it was perceived by those who dwelled in Yasin Tepe.[50]

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[45] Altaweel et al. 2012: 27.
[46] Altaweel et al. 2012: 28.
[47] Nishiyama 2016.
[48] Matney 2016.
[49] Herrmann and Schloen 2016.

Our UAV survey was conducted both in 2015 and 2016 and was able to produce orthophotos as well as the first detailed topographical plan of the site (Fig. 2b). When we view the mound and the topographical plan, several features stand out. First, as already mentioned by the Iraqi DGA team,[51] the acropolis has at least four gateways in the northeast, northwest, southwest, and southeast. Only in the northwestern gate area are any standing stone and mortar structures preserved. The largest opening is at the northeast, judging from its size very possibly the city's main gate. These remnants of gateways are likely to date from the Islamic period, with some probably preserving older structure beneath.

Second, the acropolis is surrounded by a broad ditch (ca. 25–30 m in width), which probably functioned as a defensive moat. Such moat remains are also attested at Bakr Awa,[52] and this may therefore be part of the normal defensive strategy for such large settlements during the Islamic period in the Shahrizor. However, there is a possibility that the history of the moat at Yasin Tepe goes back earlier.

Third, there is the lower town, which surrounds the acropolis. It has a varied morphology, as can be seen from the topographical map (Fig. 2b). The northwestern part is the highest where our survey collected mainly Islamic-period potsherds. The western and southwestern parts are the physically the second highest, and here again a small number of Islamic-period potsherds was collected. The eastern and southeastern portions are the lowest in height. Although the edges of the lower town still preserve in places a height comparable to its western and southwestern parts, the majority of this area is ca. 545–548 m above sea level. It seems that this part of the lower town had in the past been scraped down by ca. 2.5–4 m, probably for agricultural purposes. This area, according to our survey, produced a large number of Iron Age potsherds and very few of the Islamic period. Thus, we assume that the normally thick Islamic period layers at this point had been removed, permitting us to reach the Iron Age layers fairly easily. Since one of our aims was to investigate the Iron Age occupation, we therefore decided to open trenches in this part of the lower town.

4. Excavations in 2016 and 2017

The excavations were conducted in the southeastern part of the lower town (Fig. 3). In 2016, three operations (Operations A, B, and C) were executed, while in 2017, we focused on extending Operation A to the south and to the west. Eventually, we were able to identify an "elite" residence in the lower town.

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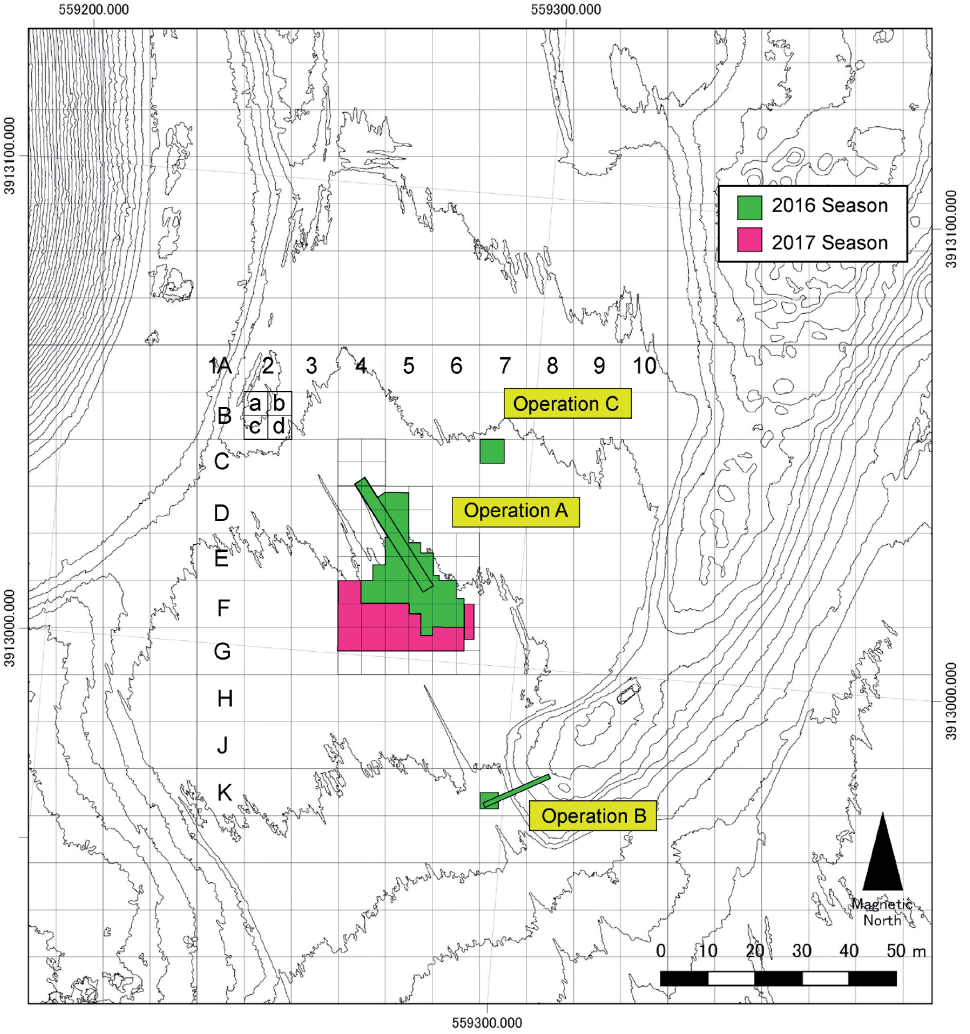
[50] There is of course an issue of how the Assyrian countryside was constructed which has been disputed since the 1990s: e.g., Wilkinson 1995; Wilkinson et al. 2005; Ur 2017a: 184-186; 2017b. A sudden increase of small dispersed settlements, which was typically observed in the Jazirah, is often considered to represent rural colonization under imperial rule. The situation in the eastern imperial fringe may offer a different picture than the structured and planned landscapes that can be observed in the Assyrian heartland: Ur 2017b: 24-28. We plan to examine such issues through the investigation of the area surrounding Yasin Tepe.

[51] Hijara 1975: 278.

[52] Miglus et al. 2013: 68, fig. 3.

4.1 Operation A

The operation started in 2016 with the excavation of a long test trench (2 × 25 m), ultimately extended to an area of ca. 20 × 30 m by the end of the 2017 season. As anticipated, the Iron Age layers were encountered just below the surface soil (20–30 cm in thickness). Based on the study of the pottery typology and the artefacts, these layers can be dated to the 8th–7th century BCE[53] and can be divided into at least three phases.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K
a
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c
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Operation C
Operation A
Operation B
Magnetic North
0
10
20
30
40
50 m

Fig. 3: Excavated areas in the southeastern part of the lower town (YAP Archive).

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[53] We took a number of radiocarbon samples from various locations within each operation, and these will be analyzed in the near future.

In the earliest phase (probably 8th century BCE), two large buildings were unearthed. In the last phase (probably late 7th century BCE), the area was used as a graveyard. Some graves were constructed in the central courtyard (see below). We have so far identified 14 graves: all of them were pit graves, except for one jar burial. The grave goods encountered consist of pottery vessels, beads (carnelian, agate, faience, glass, *etc*.), bronze fibulae, bronze bracelets, and an iron dagger. In some graves, so-called "Assyrian Palace Ware" was identified.

In the north of this operation, Building B was excavated revealing the foundation walls made of cobble stones. The structure displayed a rectangular room with a later drainage channel positioned in the western part of the room and running from southeast to northwest. Just to the south of this room, there was an area with stone pavement forming an elongated inner courtyard.[54] The entrance to Building B, which was paved with baked bricks, was located in the southwest adjacent to the rectangular room.

The largest building so far excavated at Yasin Tepe was also discovered during Operation A, situated just to the south of Building B. It was labelled Building A (Figs. 4-5). In the northeast

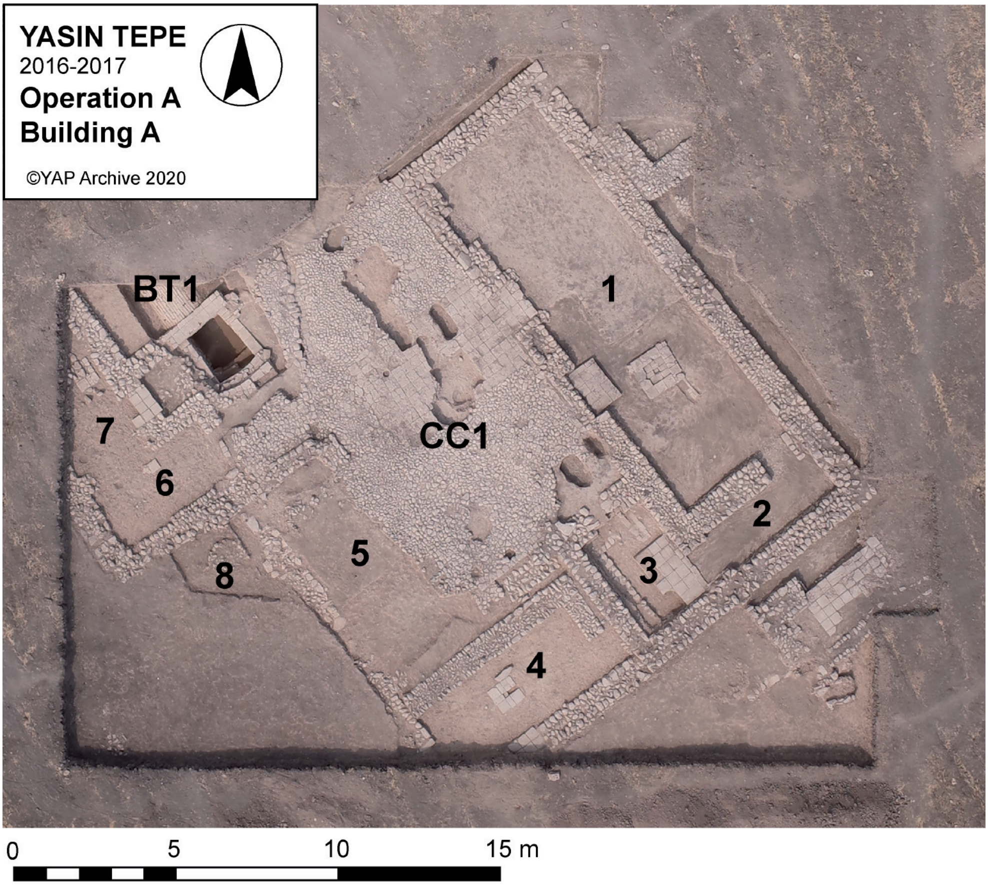

Fig. 4: UAV photo of Building A in Operation A with the room numbers (YAP Archive).

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[54] A similar style of stone pavement was identified also in Area 2 of Bakr Awa where it was dated to the Iron Age: Miglus et al. 2013: 49, fig. 8.

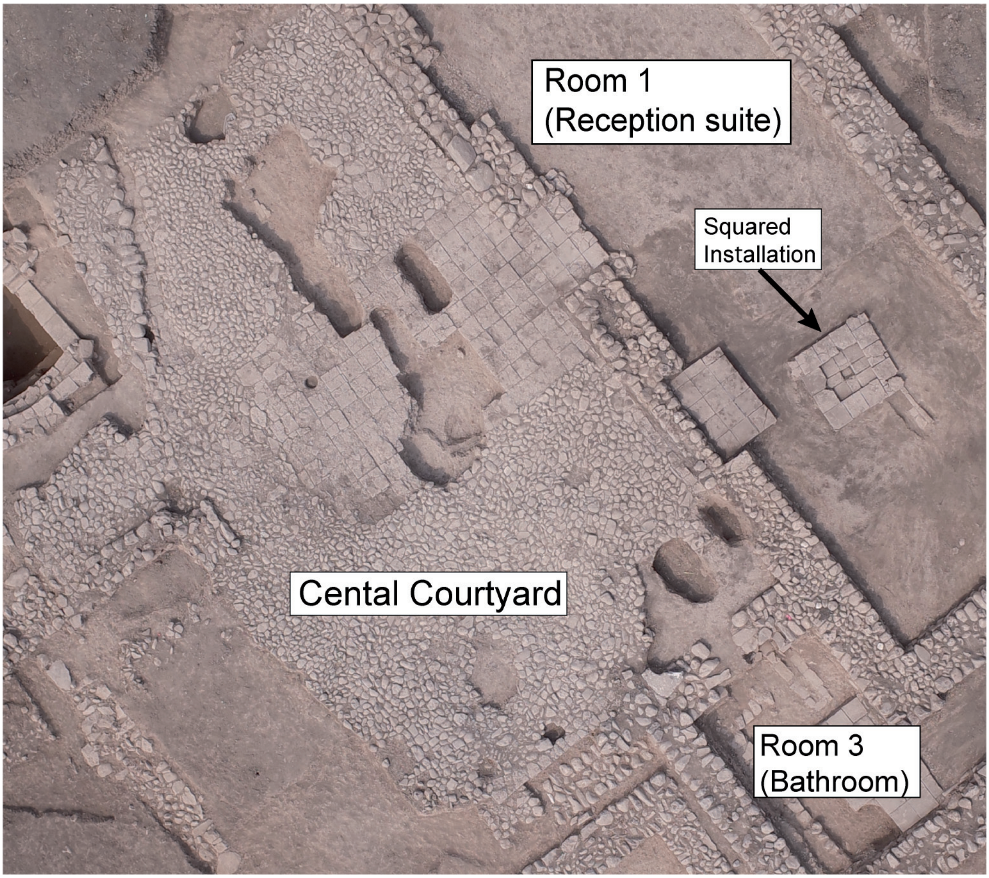

Fig. 5: Detail of the central courtyard of Building A. Note the use of baked brick and stone pavements, and the square-shaped installation in the central right (YAP Archive).

part of the building, we unearthed a room that we have designated as a “reception suite” (Room 1), a well-known feature in Neo-Assyrian architecture, where it typically is found in palaces and elite buildings.[55] The reception suite in Building A measures ca. 6 × 15 m (with 4 × 13 m for the inner space), with a wall thickness of 0.9-1.0 m. Unfortunately, only the stone foundation (consisting of two or three rows of stones) was identified, with no traces of mud bricks. The entrance of the room is open to the southwest and leads into a central courtyard paved with baked bricks and cobble stones. There are two niches within the interior of the wall that borders the central courtyard. The right-side of these niches, as one enters the suite from the courtyard, had a brick paved floor. The reception suite is connected to a narrow corridor (Room 2) to the south, leading to a “bathroom” (Room 3) (Fig. 5), which was always paved with baked bricks.[56] This brick pavement was badly damaged since at some point after the room had been abandoned, a jar burial, a pit grave, and a bread oven (Arabic *tannūr*) were installed. Below the brick pavement, a drainage channel constructed by baked bricks was unearthed, running to the northwest.

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[55] Kertai 2015: 185-190.

[56] Kertai 2015: 190-195.

A similar style of reception suite is attested in a building in the lower town of Til Barsip (modern Tell Ahmar) in Area E (Building E1).[57] Room 2 in the Til Barsip building is not only similar in style to the Yasin Tepe reception suite, but also in size (with 4 × 12 m for the inner space), in the bathroom's placement, and in the presence of a square installation found within the suite (see immediately below). There are differences in detail: the location of this square installation is further to the left as one enters the suite from the courtyard, and the niches facing the interior of the suite were also different from the Yasin Tepe example: one niche was on the wall facing the courtyard, while the other niche was positioned within the opposite wall of the suite.

The most notable feature of the Yasin Tepe reception suite is a square-shaped installation made of baked bricks in the southern part (Fig. 5). Baked brick installations in the reception suite are often referred to as "rails" or "tram-rails": two parallel lines of bricks or stones upon which are believed to have been set the braziers for heating during wintertime.[58] However, the specimen from Yasin Tepe is not of the "rails" type. Instead, it is similar to a structure encountered at Til Barsip, which its excavator Guy Bunnens described as a "four-sided hearth."[59] But since no burnt remains or ash were found inside the installation at Yasin Tepe, the identification as a hearth is doubtful.

Moving on from the reception suite of Building A, there is a series of rooms positioned so as to surround the central courtyard (CC1) on three sides (Fig. 4). The northwestern side had no rooms and seems to have been left open. Several parts of Building A had been modified by the setting of new walls or rooms in CC1. Room 5, for example, was probably added later, reducing the size of CC1. In two of the rooms (Rooms 4 and 7), square installations similar to those in the reception suite have been unearthed. Room 4 had an entrance from the outside of the building complex, while Room 7 was accessed from CC1. Although we need to excavate further in order to understand fully the western part of Building A, the current layout of Building A closely resembles spatially that of the "Rotes Haus" ("Red House") excavated at Assur (modern Qal'at Sherqat),[60] which is one of the largest houses excavated at this site to date and measures ca. 20–30 × 30–40 m.[61] It has two courtyards with three reception suites surrounding the three sides of the main courtyard, and is considered to be an elite residence. Thus, Building A at Yasin Tepe may also be assumed to be an elite residence, built under the strong influence of traditional Assyrian architecture.

The most impressive discovery of Operation A was an undisturbed underground brick tomb (BT1) in the northwest of Building A, found during the 2017 season (BT1 in Figs. 4 and 6). The tomb was probably built at the same time as Building A, or when Building A was in use, since the long and short axes of the tomb run parallel with the walls of Building A.

The tomb, which was constructed lower than the floor level of Building A, consists of an entrance shaft and a chamber with vaulted ceiling (Fig. 6a).[62] The entrance to the chamber was fully packed with bricks, giving the impression that the inside had not been touched since its last opening (Fig. 6b). Within the chamber, two burial phases could be established. The first dated to the time when at least three bodies were placed on the brick-paved floor (Fig. 6c),

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[57] Bunnens 2006: 68, 154, fig. 53; 2016: fig. 6.4a.

[58] Kertai 2015: 185-186.

[59] Bunnens 2006: 68, 154, fig. 53.

[60] Preusser 1954: 20-24, pl. 11a.

[61] Miglus 1999: 37, 294-295, pl. 73.339; Kertai 2015: 2010, pl. 15c.

[62] The vaulted ceiling was partially revealed in 2017, and investigated fully during the 2019 season.

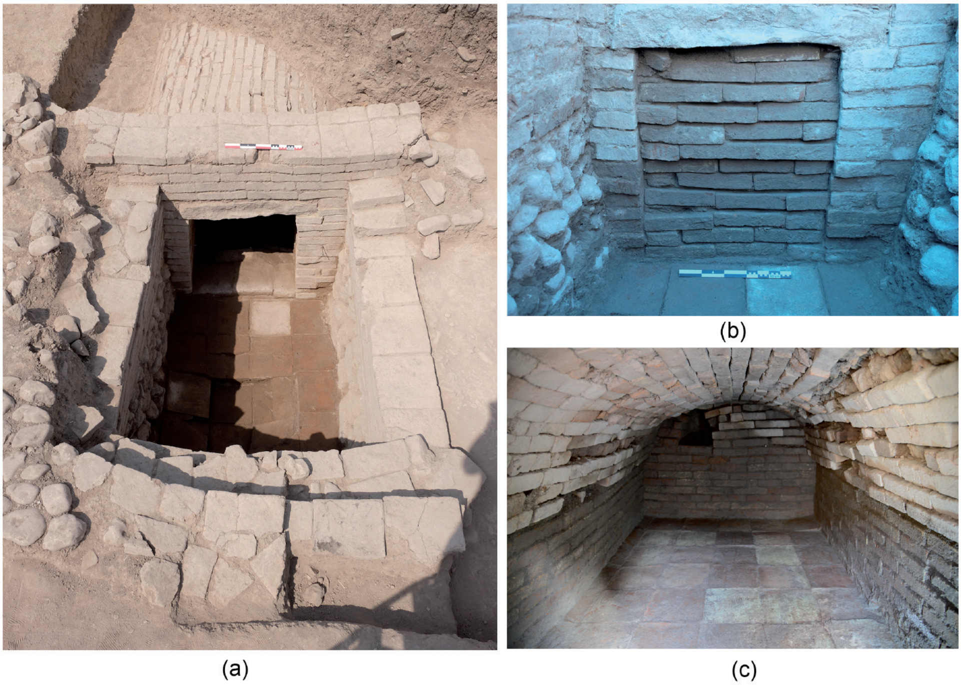

Fig. 6: (a): Brick tomb (BT1) unearthed beneath the floor level of Building A (from the southeast); (b): Entrance to the burial chamber with baked brick sealing; (c): Burial chamber cleaned after removing the first burial (YAP Archive).

together with abundant burial goods including pottery, bronze objects, glass vessels, iron arrowheads, and various types and materials of beads. These burial goods were later deliberately crushed and buried beneath the soil (Fig. 7a-b).

During the tomb's second phase of use, a so-called "bathtub" coffin was installed in the chamber (Fig. 7c). This type of coffin, which has its roots in Assyrian culture, subsequently spread to Babylonia, Elam and to some extent to the Levant and eastern Anatolia.[63] The coffin-type was also used later in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Persian periods. The coffin from BT1 measured ca. 140 cm in length, ca. 70 cm in maximum width and ca. 60 cm in height. While the best quality coffins of this type are made of bronze,[64] this specimen was in terracotta. It had two handles on its squared-off side and one handle on its rounded side, with a rope-pattern clay band attached to the upper part of the coffin's exterior and a small hole penetrating the bottom of the rounded side. No coffin lid was found, and there is a possibility that the lid was made of wood or plant matting, which decayed and thus disappeared.[65]

Inside the coffin, the remains of at least four individuals were identified: two males and two females. The bones were positioned in a random manner, as if having been thrown

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[63] Baker 1995: 213-215; Curtis and Green 1997: 17-18; Curtis 2008a: 168-169; Wicks 2015: 126-128.

[64] Curtis 2008a; Wicks 2015.

[65] Cf. Baker 1995: 213, who observes that lids for bathtub coffins could also be made of baked bricks, unbaked bricks, and ceramics.

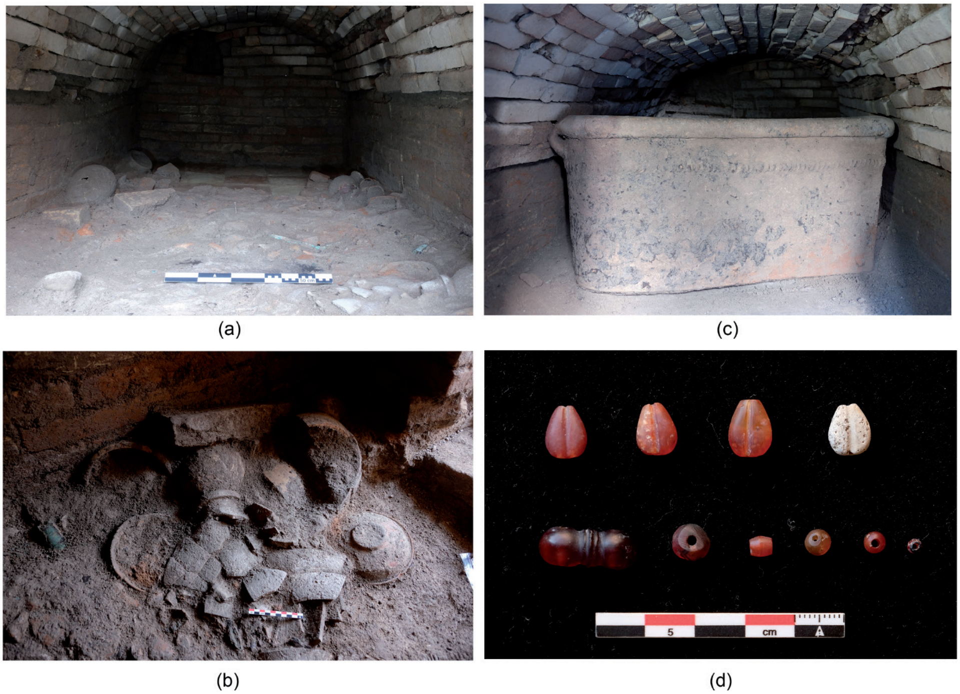

Fig. 7: (a) First burial phase revealed in the burial chamber; (b) Detail of the first burial phase; note the crushed potsherds and artefacts; (c): Second burial phase with the terracotta bathtub in situ; (d): Various beads in carnelian and blue schist (upper right) found inside the bathtub coffin (YAP Archive).

carelessly into the coffin, except for one female set of bones found in the bottom of the coffin. This suggests that this last body was buried with care whereas the others were secondary burials. A scattering of burial goods was found in the coffin, including various beads (made from gold, silver, carnelian, agate and faience), unidentified ivory/bone objects, bronze bowls, rings, earrings, small vessels and so on. Some beads were of a distinctive shape which we associate with local production (Fig. 7b). We are still in the process of analysing these grave goods, which show not only Assyrian influence but also local ornamentations.

A similar bathtub coffin, (ARB 269) was recently also found in a brick tomb (A-g8) excavated at Erbil (ancient Arbela) near the citadel.[66] Unfortunately, the Erbil brick tomb had been looted and the coffin was broken into a number of pieces. It is therefore assumed to have been brought into the tomb from outside,[67] although the shape is similar, with handles, a clay band with rope-pattern impressions, and a hole on the rounded side.[68]

Like the reception suite of Building A, the Yasin Tepe brick tomb also finds its strongest parallel in Assur,[69] where tombs dating from the Middle to the Neo-Assyrian period offer a most diverse range of tomb types. The brick tomb from Erbil, too, shows a construction similar to the one at Yasin Tepe, with an entrance shaft and a chamber with a vaulted ceiling.[70] The type is encountered also among the queens' tombs at Kalhu (modern Nimrud),[71] confirming that such brick constructions were fundamentally an elite phenomenon and rooted in the Assyrian tradition.

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[66] Tomb A-g8 with coffin ARB 269: van Ess et al. 2012: 117-118.

[67] van Ess et al. 2012: 117.

[68] van Ess et al. 2012: pl. 5b.

[69] Haller 1952: 100-122, 149-169; Hauser 2012: 234-241.

To conclude, the terracotta bathtub coffin and the brick tomb clearly reveal, first, the influence at Yasin Tepe of Assyrian burial customs, and, second, the fact that whoever was buried here on the eastern fringe of the Empire was consciously following Assyrian cultural models. The brick tomb was apparently a family structure belonging to the residence of Building A, occupied by the elite of Yasin Tepe. Future analysis of the bones inside the chamber will hopefully reveal the physical condition of the various occupants at the time of their death as well as their family relationships.

In addition to the coffin and the tomb, we would like to briefly discuss three finds from Operation A, which further highlight Yasin Tepe's Assyrian connection. The first find is a bronze saucer lamp from BT1 (Fig. 8a). It was found in the fill near the back wall of the chamber. In the back wall, there is a niche on the upper left side where the bronze saucer lamp had apparently been placed. However, soil had entered through a crack in the back of niche and pushed the lamp into the fill. The saucer lamp is strikingly similar to those found in the queens' tombs at Kalhu,[72] with a bowl at the bottom, a pillar to support the lamp, and a handle connecting the bowl and lamp. Such saucer lamps, both in bronze and pottery, are fairly common in the Assyrian cultural sphere.[73] Nevertheless, specimens in bronze are rare outside the imperial core, and the type's presence at Yasin Tepe is again suggestive of strong Assyrian influence.

The second find is an inscribed bronze necklet, or "torc", discovered in Room 4 of Building A during the 2017 season (Fig. 8b).[74] This object, with a crescent-shaped plaque, was designed to fit the neck by springing one of the terminals. Unfortunately, the movable terminal is broken and missing. The plaque carries two lines of cuneiform votive inscription in Akkadian. A comparable necklet is known from Sam'al in southeastern Turkey; although that specimen was found in a heavily twisted condition, it has a similar crescent-shaped plaque with inscription.[75] In the case of the example from Yasin Tepe, the necklet was attached to a boy servant dedicated to the temple of Nabû.

It is difficult to explain how this necklet came to be discarded on the floor of one of the rooms in Building A. Its presence, however, suggests that a temple of Nabû was located at Yasin Tepe, and if that was indeed the case, then an imperial initiative to control the city and the province by means of religious power may be inferred. Temples dedicated to the god Nabû have been identified in all imperial capital cities, namely at Assur, Kalhu, Dūr-Šarrukēn (modern Khorsabad) and Nineveh (modern Tell Kuyunjiq and Tell Nabī Yūnus).[76] In provincial

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[70] van Ess et al. 2012: 109-113, pls. 1-3.

[71] Hussein 2016.

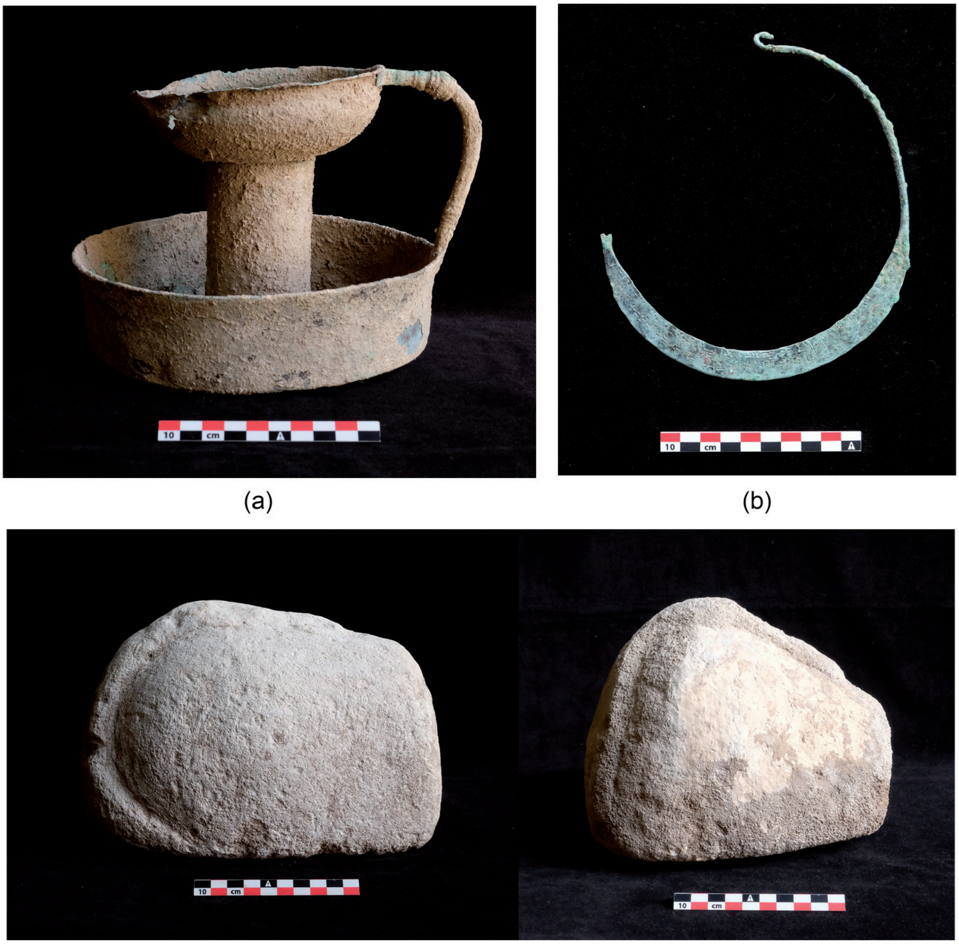
[72] Curtis 2008b: 243-244; Hussein 2016: pl. 83 (Tomb II), pl. 98 (Tomb III), pl. 180 (Tomb IV).

[73] Curtis 2008b: 244.

[74] The inscription was deciphered by Prof. Dr Shigeo Yamada, University of Tsukuba. Archaeological and philological studies of the necklet will appear in a forthcoming joint paper; see also Yamada 2020.

[75] Andrae 1943: 96-97, pl. 44ak; Wartke 2005: 83, fig. 89.

[76] Neumann 2018: 183.



(a) (b)

(c)

Fig. 8: (a): Bronze saucer lamp after preliminary cleaning; (b): Bronze necklet with cuneiform inscription; (c): Two stone duck weights (YAP Archive).

cities, however, there are very few temples attributed to Nabû,[77] and so far, no temple dedicated to this deity has been archaeologically identified in the eastern areas of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. If such a temple indeed existed at Yasin Tepe, then the city must have been an important religious centre for the Assyrians of the eastern imperial fringe.

Finally, the third find complex consists of two stone duck weights found on the floor of Room 7 of Building A (Fig. 8c).[78] Both are made of dolomite. The larger one weighs in at 9.8 kg, and the smaller at 6.2 kg. Similar stone duck weights are known from Kalhu, but there with inscriptions, figures, and engraved strokes to indicate the weight.[79] The specimens from Yasin Tepe carry merely strokes.[80] The presence of duck weights is a strong indication that the Assyrian weight system was in use at the site. In addition, the weights' presence in Building A may indicate that the building had a function in the taxation and the control of Yasin Tepe's commercial trade.

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[77] In Syria, a temple of Nabû is attested at Tell Halaf (ancient Guzana), and possibly also at Arslan Tash (ancient Ḥaddatu); cf. Turner 1968: 63-64, fig. 1.

[78] A joint publication of these duck weights is being prepared in collaboration with Prof. Dr Shigeo Yamada.

4.2 Operation B

This operation is located ca. 40 m south of Operation A in a possible area of outer fortification and measured 1 × 15 m (Fig. 3). Our attention subsequently turned to the western end, where we opened an area of 3 × 3 m. The aim of the trench was to investigate the presence and dating of any outer fortification. With the top soil removed, a very shallow accumulation of Iron Age layers was identified, and then Bronze Age layers. The depth from the surface ground was ca. 0.5 m.

In these layers, a large mud brick wall was encountered (Fig. 9a), whose north and east sides could be determined. The estimated thickness of the wall measured at least 3.4 m, with a minimum length of 4.5 m (NE-SW). The size of the mud bricks was 40 × 40 × 9–10 cm, which is considerably larger than the most commonly attested Iron Age baked bricks (32 × 32 × 7 cm). We still cannot determine whether this wall was part of the fortification wall, or not. Pottery associated with the wall includes wares made of a distinctive black/grey coloured fabric (Fig. 9b). Some specimens of such black/grey ware have incised decoration with white filling, resembling the so-called "White Paste Inlay Ware" typical for Strata II to IV at Nuzi (modern Yorgan Tepe),[81] but seen also at sites in the Erbil region[82] and further afield in the Syrian Jazirah (Middle Jazirah IA).[83]

At the moment, we consider it therefore very likely that this wall belongs not to the Iron Age, but to the Bronze Age (possibly early Late Bronze Age). This indicates that the Iron Age layers found in Operation A gradually become thinner towards the south around Operation B, due to recent scraping of the soil for cultivation. Therefore, if we wish to find the Iron Age outer fortifications of Yasin Tepe we will need to extend our investigation to other locations.

4.3 Operation C

The operation is located northeast of Operation A and measured 5 × 5 m (Fig. 3). The reason for situating the trench there is that during the surface survey, abundant Iron Age potsherds were collected in the area. At the depth of 0.8 m from the ground surface, unfortunately no building structures were encountered. However, we did obtain a large quantity of animal bones and potsherds dated to the Iron Age, and more specifically to the period from the 8th to the 7th centuries BCE. At present, we assume from the presence and density of animal bones and potsherds that this area was a waste dump although further analysis of the finds unearthed may in due course suggest a better interpretation.

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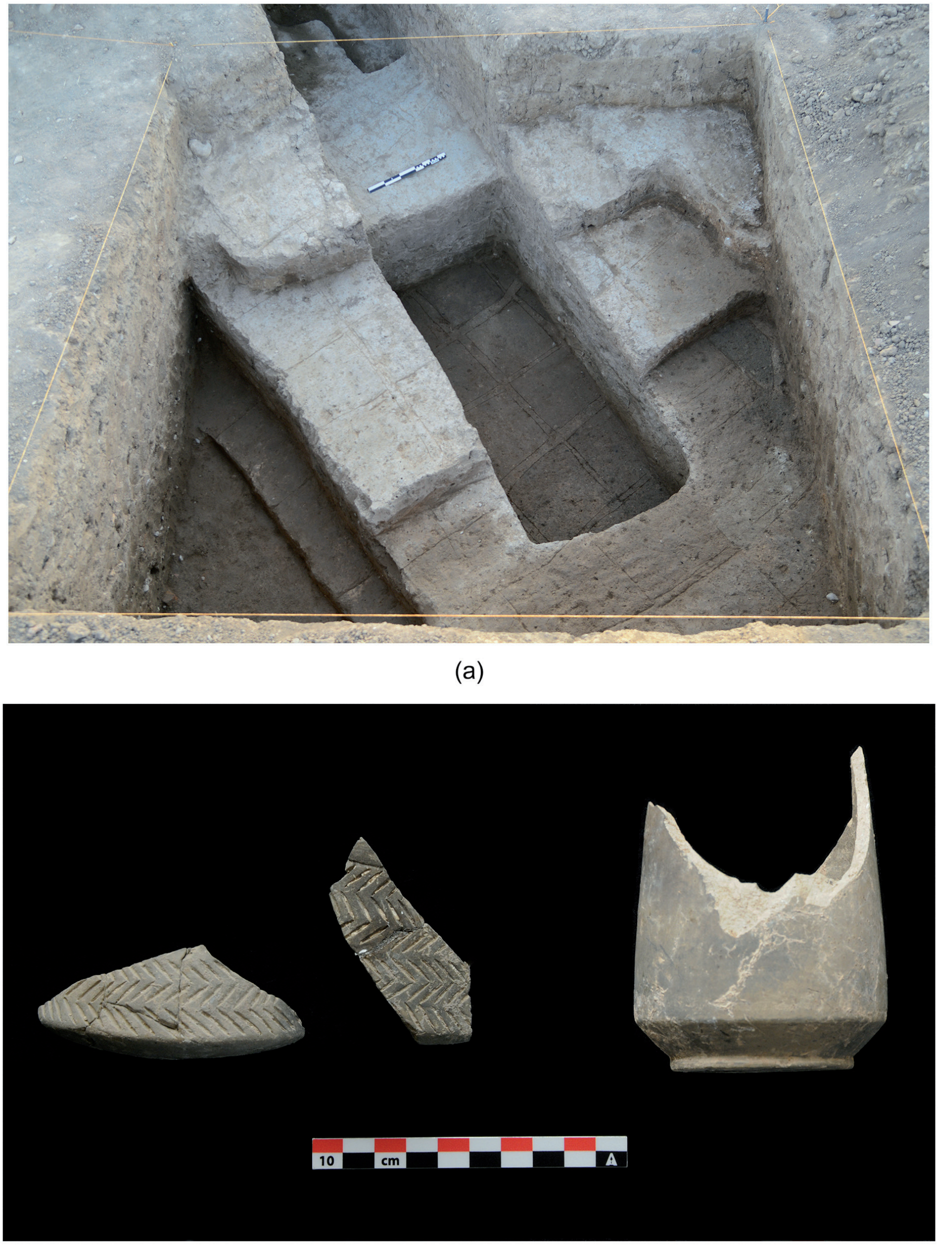
[79] Curtis and Reade 1995: 194 (BM 91439 and BM 91442).

[80] An almost identical example was found at Nimrud, again with only strokes on one side; that piece weighs in at 9.82 kg. See Mallowan 1966: 421, 350 (ND 7888).

[81] Starr 1939: 402; 1937: pl. 91/N-R, T-W, pl. 92/A-S.

[82] Schwartz 2016: 390, 395 fig. 12.

[83] Pfälzner 2007: 241.



(a)

(b)

Fig. 9: (a) Mud-brick wall in Operation B (from the west); (b): Grey/black ware from Operation B, the left specimen with remains of white inlays (YAP Archive).

5. Geophysical survey

A geophysical magnetometry survey was carried out by the company Eastern Atlas GmbH & Co. KG during the 2018 season, with Burkart Ullrich and Nikolaas Noorda conducting the fieldwork using a convertible LEA system designed by Eastern Atlas that includes an array of 10 Foerster fluxgate gradiometer probes mounted on a cart, a LEA-D2 data recording device and GNSS and Odometer positioning systems. The aim was to investigate the settle-

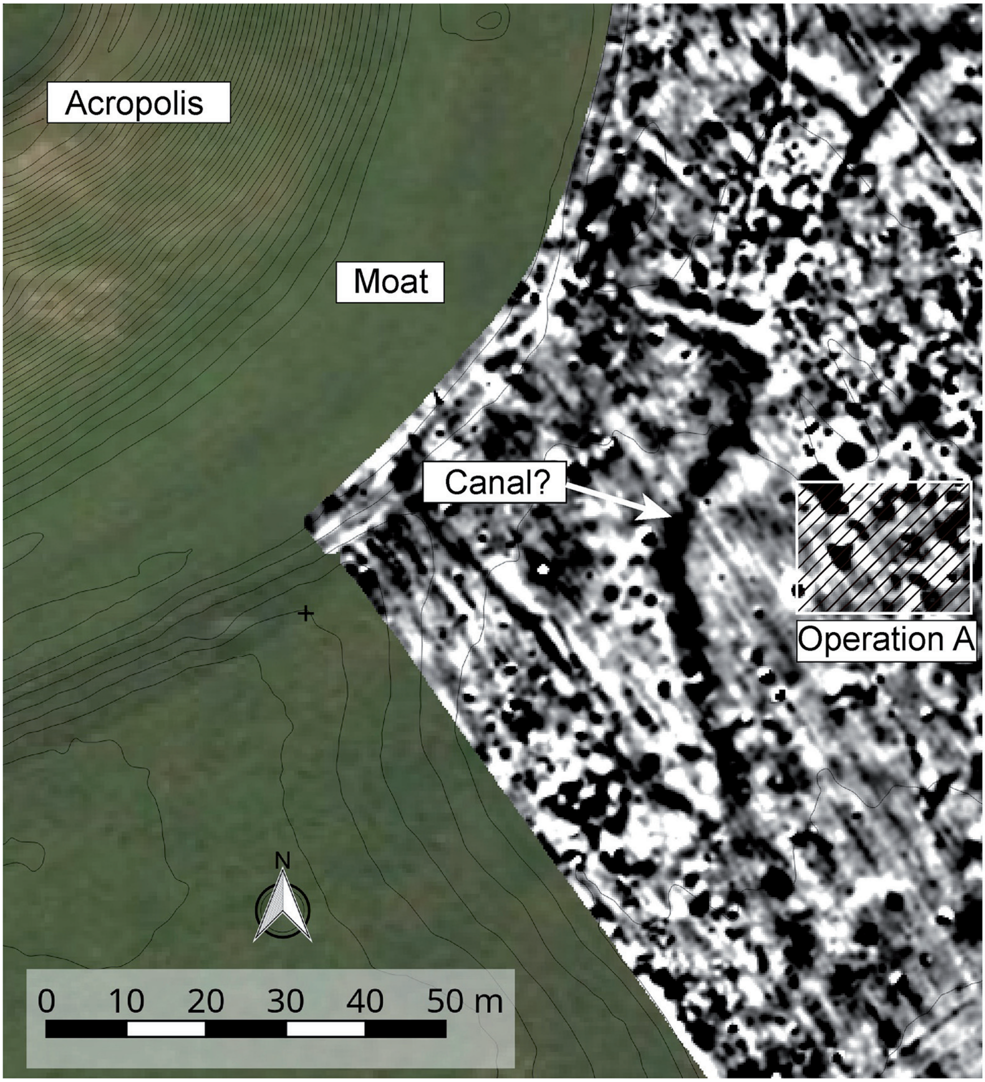


Fig. 10: Magnetometer map of the southeastern part of the lower town (YAP Archive).

ment structure of the lower town and produce a guideline for future excavations. The focus was placed on the eastern part of the lower town, where the Iron Age layers are less covered by later layers. A total of 6 ha was surveyed and a wide range of anomalies were identified.

The analysis is still in progress, but we would like here to present one major feature which may have influenced Iron Age settlement structure, including streets, monumental buildings, open spaces, domestic and craft areas and fortification structures. A section of the resulting magnetometer is shown in Fig. 10, where we can see a large linear depression (in black) running from the northeast to south, diverting its way slightly to the east in the central part of the image. The depression seems to fade towards the limit of the settlement. This depression is thought to be a ditch or canal system within the lower town. It shows a length of more than 150 m and, in some parts, two anomalies run parallel to each other or are set at right angles (not seen in the image). Since the Iron Age layers are ca. 20–30 cm below the ground surface, it is highly possible that these anomalies also belong to the Iron Age.

During the 2019 season we were able to dig a single trial trench across one of these linear anomalies, and indeed, a canal like structure was identified; the results will be discussed in detail in a future publication. How to interpret this canal system? In light of the fact that there is a comparable example for a city canal system of Neo-Assyrian date in the Lower Town II of Dūr-Katlimmu (modern Tell Šēḫ Ḥamad) on the Khabur river in eastern Syria,[84] our current working hypothesis is that there may have been a series of internal canals at Yasin Tepe, similar to those we find in modern Venice, Amsterdam or Osaka, where the water system runs within the settlement (although admittedly, the scale and complexity are different). If the ancient settlement of Yasin Tepe existed within the same very watery environment as it does today, it would have been natural not only to use water as a defensive means but also for the transportation of goods and people. With the easy availability of water from the Bestansūr spring and the nearby Tanjero river, it would have been relatively straightforward to direct its flow into the city. At a site like Yasin Tepe, water transportation is certainly far more efficient at delivering goods than land transportation. Since the soil would become muddy in any case, the employment of a canal to transport goods and people into the lower town by boat would have been possible without concern as to the effect on the soil condition. If flat-bottomed boats were employed (such as the round vessels traditionally used in Iraq[85]), the depth of a canal would not have had to be deep. In the near future, we intend to investigate the relationship between these linear canals and the city's residential quarters further and in detail.

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[84] Pucci 2010; Fügert et al. 2014; Kühne 2018: 151, 157, 159 fig. 13. I thank Dr Daisuke Shibata, University of Tsukuba, for providing information concerning this canal.

[85] Arabic *kuphar*, also *kufa* or *quffah*, widely used on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and especially around Baghdad until the early 20th century CE: Agius 2008.

6. Conclusions

Three seasons of fieldwork at Yasin Tepe have brought to light several important pieces of evidence which elucidate provincial control on the eastern fringe of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. First, the Iron Age settlement at Yasin Tepe was significantly extended in the lower town at a time of strong cultural influence from the Assyrian heartland. Second, the presence of an elite residence (Building A) and associated brick-built tomb are hallmarks of Assyrian culture and may imply that the residents of Yasin Tepe were aware of and accepted the control of the empire. And third, the bronze neck ornament with its cuneiform votive inscription suggests that the Empire also imposed religious means of control.[86]

However that may be, it is equally clear from the excavated artefacts that Assyrian culture was not the only influence present. Local and western Iranian cultural influence can also be observed. For example, the pottery repertoire evidences distinctive local traditions and some hints at western Iranian influence.[87] Further study of these and other finds will better reveal the complex cultural factors involved, and contribute to the understanding of how these various cultural traditions mingled in the eastern imperial border region.

Finally, our magnetometer survey has confirmed that the lower town was quite densely settled. Moreover, it has revealed the possible existence of a city canal system. Recent studies of Assyrian supra-regional canal systems and water management schemes have highlighted that the Assyrians possessed significant skills in such water technology.[88] That they may have utilized this technology to transform a settlement into a canal city is not beyond the realms of possibility, especially as water was already of fundamental importance to the settlement as a means both of transportation and defence. While this matter of course requires further investigation, as does the supra-regional canal system of the Shahrizor, the magnetometer survey has provided intriguing new data for our understanding of the settlement structure at Yasin Tepe.

As discussed above, whether Yasin Tepe is to be identified with the city of Dūr-Aššur remains an open question. However, it is apparent from our recent fieldwork that the Iron Age settlement here covered the entire tell-type site including the lower town. This makes Yasin Tepe one of the largest known Iron Age settlements in the western Zagros region. Positioned some 40 km from the Hewrāmān mountain range, it would certainly have been a practical location for keeping watch over the eastern border and the neighbouring territories where the Neo-Assyrian Empire often conducted military campaigns.[89]

Thanks to the efforts of local scholars, and of those international archaeologists who take a deep interest in Iraqi Kurdistan, the character of Assyrian control on the eastern fringe is now beginning to be understood. We sincerely hope that the YAP, with its multiple analytical methods, will continue to contribute to the understanding of this ancient frontier region of the western Zagros – an important border region until today.

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[86] Cf. Neumann 2018.

[87] A similar observation is made in the pottery study of the Dinka Settlement Complex in the Peshdar Plain: Herr et al. 2019.

[88] See the contributions in Kühne (ed.) 2018.

[89] Cf. Radner 2013.

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Royal Assyrian building activities in the northwestern provincial center of Ḫarrān

1. Introduction

Ḫarrān,[2] a large garrison and important trading center situated on the route between the Mediterranean Sea and the plains of the middle Tigris, appears to have had special political, military, and religious significance long before the so-called Sargonid period (721–610 BCE), when this city, its principal temple Eḫulḫul, its tutelary deities (the moon-god Sîn, Nikkal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna), and its largely Aramaean population enjoyed a privileged position in the Assyrian Empire.

The city of Ḫarrān — whose Akkadian name means “way, road, carrefour, journey, caravan” — might have originally been established as a trading center in the third millennium BCE. The strategic military position of the city, whose site is near the modern village of Altınbaşak (forty-four kilometers southeast of Şanlıurfa), was recognized early on by the kings of the Middle Assyrian period. Adad-nārārī I (1305–1274 BCE), Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 BCE), and Tukultī-Ninurta I (1243–1207 BCE) undertook military campaigns in the region. Adad-nārārī I and Shalmaneser I both boast of having conquered the “fortress of Ḫarrān,” and the later Middle-Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I (1114–1076 BCE) states that he hunted elephants near this city.[3] It was not until the reign of the famous ninth-century-BCE king Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE), or that of his also-powerful son and successor Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE),[4] that Ḫarrān was (more or less) permanently incorporated into the Assyrian Empire. From the time of Sargon II (721–705 BCE) until the end of the Assyrian Empire in 609 BCE, Ḫarrān and its temple to the moon-god were very well treated

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[2] The name – meaning “way, road, carrefour, journey, caravan” – indicates the city may have originally been established as a trading center. The ruins of Ḫarrān lie approximately forty kilometer south-southeast of the commercial city Şanlıurfa (ancient Edessa). The modern village situated on top of the mound is now a provincial capital in southeastern Turkey.

[3] See respectively Grayson 1987: 131 no. A.0.76.1: 13; Grayson 1987: 184 no. A.0.77.1: 84; and Grayson 1991a: 26 no. A.0.87.1: vi 70–75.

[4] For the opinion that Ḫarrān was incorporated into Assyria by Ashurnasirpal II, see Reade 1989: 96; and Yamada 2000: 70. Note, however, that Postgate 1973: 123 §4 suggests that this took place during the reign of Shalmaneser III.

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and respected by the Assyrian kings and it was especially honored when Sargon abolished its taxes and corvée obligations, thereby making it one of the few Assyrian cities, apart from the traditional religious capital Aššur, to have ever been granted the highly-coveted *kidinnu*-status.[5] In addition to enjoying freedom from *ilku*- and *tupšikku*-services, Sargon and some of his successors, his grandson Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE) and his great grandson Ashurbanipal (668–ca. 631 BCE) in particular, made concerted efforts to improve Ḫarrān's principal temple, Eḫulḫul, a building whose Sumerian ceremonial name means "House of Joy" or "House That Gives Joy," by donating precious metal to (lavishly) adorn its interior (in particular its cellas and ante-cellas) or completely rebuilding and expanding the Eḫulḫul temple complex, which included a temple to the god Nusku (Emelamana; "House of the Radiance of Heaven").

Despite the fact that there are numerous Neo-Assyrian sources recording royal building activities at Ḫarrān, especially those of Assyria's last great king Ashurbanipal,[6] information about these important construction projects is not widespread in Assyriological literature or online, in non-scholarly resources (like Wikipedia). In most cases, the work of Shalmaneser III, Sargon II, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal is summed up in a handful of sentences or omitted altogether.[7] This is in part due to the fact that I never published my 2003 PhD dissertation *Eḫulḫul*, *Egipar*, *Emelamana*, and *Sîn's Akītu-House*: *A Study of Assyrian Building Activities at Ḫarrān* (University of Toronto). In an attempt to remedy this situation, I will give a detailed overview of the construction projects of the Assyrian kings in the northwestern provincial center of Ḫarrān, especially those sponsored by Ashurbanipal.[8] Hopefully, this paper will draw scholars' and laypeople's attention to the fact that the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus (555–539 BCE) was not the only first-millennium-BCE Mesopotamian king to have undertaken large scale building activities in this important cult center of the moon-god.[9]

It should be noted here, at the outset of the paper, that excavations of the ruins of Ḫarrān in the 1950s, 1980s, and 1990s did not unearth a single inscribed Assyrian object, nor did these scientific investigations find the remains of Eḫulḫul, apart from numerous bricks and half-bricks of Nabonidus, none of which were found in situ.[10] Therefore, any comments made about the plan, size, and appearance of Sîn's temple at Ḫarrān in this paper are based solely on interpretations of the extant source material. At present, claims made here cannot be presently confirmed by the archaeological record. Thus, any ideas forwarded in this contribution (and in Novotny 2003) must be regarded as conjectural.

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[5] For discussions on the political situation by which Sargon ascended the throne, see Grayson 1991b: 87-88; and Chamaza 1992: 21-33. The matter is also discussed in the introduction to Frame 2020.

[6] See below in the Appendix for the inscriptions from the reign of Ashurbanipal.

[7] See, for example, see the Wikipedia entries for Eḫulḫul and Harran: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehulhul and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harran (last accessed 12 May 2020).

[8] Since the discussions of the inscriptions contained in the PhD dissertation (= Novotny 2003) have been largely superseded by information provided in the Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period (RINAP) series (see, for example, Novotny and Jeffers 2018: Ashurbanipal 5-8, 10, 23). I have no plans for publishing the PhD dissertation as a separate monograph, and this paper serves as a summary of some of the major ideas presented in that work.

[9] For new editions (with English translations) of those inscriptions, see Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: Nabonidus 28-29, 46-53; 2001. English translations of the relevant passages of some of those inscriptions are included below in the Appendix; see nos. 13-16.

[10] See, for example, Lloyd and Brice 1951: 77-111; Prag 1970: 63-94; Postgate 1973: 122-123 §1; Yardımcı 1984: 217-218; 1985: 192; 1986: 194-195; 1990: 363-378; 1991: 423-442; 1993: 437-449; 1998: 167-169.

2. Overview of Royal Building Activities from Shalmaneser III to Esarhaddon[11]

Prior to the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–ca. 631 BCE), Assyria's last great king, little is known about Ḫarrān's temples. A temple of the moon-god Sîn existed in Ḫarrān from at least the Old Babylonian Period onwards – from the reign of Narām-Sîn of Ešnunna (1808–1798 BCE) or Zimrī-Līm of Mari (1774–1762 BCE)[12] – but beyond that, virtually nothing about the sanctuary and its building history is known before the seventh century BCE.

The earliest king known from extant sources to have sponsored construction on Eḫulḫul is the ninth-century-BCE Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE). No contemporary information or details about this project have yet come to light. Both Ashurbanipal and the Neo-Babylonian ruler Nabonidus (555–539 BCE), now the most famous builder of this temple of the moon-god, credit Shalmaneser, son of Ashurnasirpal, with building Sîn's earthly residence at Ḫarrān, but neither provide any information about that king's work.[13] Presumably, Ashurbanipal's workmen discovered inscribed objects of Shalmaneser III while removing the mud-brick structure of the moon-god's temple; these were likely bricks, clay foundation tablets, and clay cones, among other clay, stone, and metal-plated objects. Nabonidus, as inferred from one of his inscriptions recording his own rebuilding of Eḫulḫul, the so-called 'Eḫulḫul Cylinder Inscription' (Appendix, no. 13), appears to have known about Shalmaneser's work only from the Ashurbanipal inscriptions discovered by his workmen in the ruins of Sîn's temple.

Nothing about the building history of Eḫulḫul and the other temples at Ḫarrān from the reign of Šamšī-Adad V (823–811 BCE), Shalmaneser III's son and immediate successor, to the time of Shalmaneser V (726–722 BCE) is presently known. We have a few scant pieces of information from the reigns of Sargon II (721–705 BCE) and Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE).

Ḫarrān appears to have received special attention from Sargon II since its citizens aided him in his bid for the throne.[14] He rewarded the population of that city by abolishing the tax and corvée that had been previously imposed upon them, as well as by making donations to the temple of the moon-god. These donations are recorded on an inscription written on a clay cylinder discovered at Nineveh. In that text, Sargon states that he used "seven and a half minas of shining silver for work (pertaining) to Eḫulḫul, the residence of the god Sîn, the one who resides in the city Ḫarrā[n]."[15] The inscription, unfortunately, does not give any details about the item(s) that Sargon II had fashioned from the silver that he donated to Eḫulḫul. It is fairly certain from a letter written to him by Ṭāb-šār-Aššur, his treasurer, that this silver was not for divine emblems since those were reported to have been in good condition.[16]

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[11] This is a summary of the main points presented in Novotny 2003: 46-84.

[12] Ḫarrān's existence in the third millennium BCE as a thriving city is attested both archaeologically (with levels IIa and IIb attributed to Early Dynastic II–III) and textually; see Prag 1970: 68-72, 75-76; Archi 1988: 1-8; Bonechi 1993: 176-177. For details about whether Sîn's temple in that city is first attested in the reign of Narām-Sîn of Ešnunna or in that of Zimrī-Līm of Mari, see Novotny 2003: 4-5 nn. 17-18.

[13] See below in the Appendix, nos. 1-2 and 13.

[14] For example, see Frame 2020: Sargon II 7: ll. 10–12a: "I restored the exemption (from obligations) of (the city) Baltil (Aššur) and the city Ḫarrān, which had fallen into oblivion in the distant past, and their privileged status that had lapsed"; and Sargon II 9: ll. 9–10: "who extended his protection over the city Ḫarrān and recorded their exemption (from obligations) as if (their people were) people of the gods Anu and Dagān."

[15] Frame 2020: Sargon II 84: l. 6′.

[16] Parpola 1987: no. 50.

Nothing about Eḫulḫul is known from the reign of Sargon's son and successor Sennacherib (704–681 BCE). A badly-weathered dark grey basalt stele discovered at Aşağı Yarımca attributed to him might attest to that king's activities in the Ḫarrān region, but too little is preserved and legible on that monument to be certain of what the inscription actually recorded.[17] Moreover, the attribution to Sennacherib is not entirely certain.

During the reign of Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), Sennacherib's immediate successor, Eḫulḫul and its tutelary deities clearly received special attention, as several pieces of royal correspondence and several badly damaged royal inscriptions suggest.[18] Despite the increase in the number of sources mentioning or appearing to deal with Ḫarrān, little is known about Esarhaddon's building activities in this important city. It is unknown whether or not Esarhaddon had planned to completely rebuild Eḫulḫul and even more uncertain whether or not the construction process actually began before his untimely death in late 669 BCE. Based on the tenor of Ashurbanipal's inscriptions, it seems unlikely that Esarhaddon undertook any major construction at Ḫarrān; this interpretation of the available source material is in stark contrast to Simo Parpola's proposal that Esarhaddon completely rebuilt this temple of the moon-god and that Ashurbanipal merely completed its construction during his very short, nearly-five-month-long accession year. If major work was undertaken at Ḫarrān during Esarhaddon's reign, then that work might have been confined to starting the arduous task of removing the existing mud-brick structure, which Ashurbanipal claims was old and dilapidated. From extant sources, Esarhaddon appears to have simply (1) decorated (rooms of) Eḫulḫul, or donated metal(-plated) cult utensils; (2) set up images of himself and his heir designates Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukīn in the vicinity of Sîn's cult image; and (3) constructed a wooden temple on the outskirts of the city for the purpose of holding a special coronation ceremony on his way to conquer Egypt.[19] Moreover, Esarhaddon's mother Naqīʾa, might have also made a contribution of more than thirty talents of silver to the decoration of Eḫulḫul, as evidenced by one fragmentarily preserved piece of royal correspondence addressed to her by officials and priests living in Ḫarrān.[20] Given the poor condition of most of these sources and the ambiguity of the language of the texts (especially that of the letters), it is unclear what objects were fashioned for Sîn's temple or where these items were displayed or stationed; for example, it is unclear whether the images of the king and his sons were anthropomorphic statues or representations carved on rounded-topped steles.

Clearly Esarhaddon had important, long-term plans for Ḫarrān and Eḫulḫul — including making one his younger sons, Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣetim-muballissu, a principal priest of the moon-god — but he died before he could carry them out.[21] Fortunately for him, Ashurbanipal, his fourth eldest son and designated heir to the Assyrian throne, stepped up and realized Esarhaddon's ambitious, large-scale building activities at Ḫarrān.

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[17] Grayson and Novotny 2014: Sennacherib 1001.

[18] For details, see Novotny 2003: 56-84.

[19] Respectively, Leichty 2011: Esarhaddon 56; Parpola 1993: no. 10; and Parpola 1993: no. 174.

[20] Cole and Machinist 1999: no. 188.

[21] See Novotny 2014b: no. 19. For details about Esarhaddon's numerous children, see Novotny and Singletary 2009.

3. Ashurbanipal's Building Program at Ḫarrān[22]

Of the numerous building activities of Ashurbanipal, his work at Ḫarrān is one of the best attested in the extant textual record. Only this king's extensive work program on his palace on the citadel at Nineveh, the so-called 'North Palace' or 'House of Succession,' is as well documented in known textual sources. English translations of the relevant passages of the primary sources for work at Ḫarrān are included below, in the Appendix to this paper.

3.1 Eḫulḫul[23]

The earliest and most comprehensive account of Ashurbanipal's rebuilding of Eḫulḫul, the so-called Large Egyptian Tablets Report (henceforth LET; see Appendix, no. 1), describes six different phases of construction: (1) the preparation of the building site; (2) the rebuilding of the mud-brick superstructure; (3) the expansion of the temple grounds; (4) the roofing of the temple and its provision with doors; (5) the lavish decoration of the interior, particularly the cella and ante-cella; and (6) the return of Sîn's statue to its dais. In addition, a report written many years later — a passage referred to as the 'Canonical First Summary Report' (see Appendix, no. 2), which appears in the prologue of inscriptions written on clay prisms deposited in the structures of temples and palaces in Calah and Nineveh between 648 and 645 BCE — provides further background about how Ashurbanipal came to rebuild the temple of the moon-god at Ḫarrān. This thirty-eight-line account includes an elaborate introduction, a 'cultic apology' in which Ashurbanipal states that Sîn had chosen him in the distant past to be the builder of his earthly residence. This account of construction also reports that the Assyrian king had a second temple constructed: Emelamana, the residence of the fire-god Nusku; work on that structure will be discussed below, in §3.2.

The project, as far as we can judge, appears to have taken place during Ashurbanipal's first decade as king, perhaps starting as early as his first year as king (668 BCE) and ending sometime around his sixth or seventh regnal year (ca. 663–662 BCE). The elaborate 'cultic apology' included in the 'Canonical First Summary Report' might point towards an early start date of the project and might infer that Esarhaddon had already been planning to rebuild Eḫulḫul before he died. It is clear from one of the earliest royal texts composed in the name of Ashurbanipal (K 891) that Esarhaddon had intended to appoint one of his younger sons, Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣetim-muballissu, as a *šešgallu*-priest in Ḫarrān, but that task was realized only after his death.[24] Perhaps this appointment was to take place in connection with the rebuilding of Sîn's temple in that city. The fifteen-line 'cultic apology' stating that Ashurbanipal was divinely appointed in the past, even before his mother was conceived in her own mother's womb, to be the king who would construct Eḫulḫul anew, might therefore indicate that Esarhaddon, who had personally seen the increasingly-deteriorating condition of the moon-god's temple during the final years of his life, had planned to completely rebuild that holy structure, but died before starting the work. Ashurbanipal, who had been working closely with his father and grandmother Naqīʾa for several years (672–669 BCE), was well aware of Esarhaddon's plans, and therefore was able to immediately step in after his father's death and start the long process of completely rebuilding Eḫulḫul bigger and better than before. As Ashurbanipal's inscriptions record, the project began "by the command of the gods Sîn (and) Nusku," that is, when the king received a positive outcome to a haruspical query about the rebuilding of that temple.

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[22] This is a summary of the main points presented in Novotny 2003: 85-223.

[23] For further information and bibliography, see Novotny 2003: 109-153.

[24] Novotny 2014b: no. 19.

After receiving divine approval, Ashurbanipal had his workmen remove the existing mudbrick structure of the temple, which he states was old and dilapidated. During the removal process, objects inscribed by earlier builders were discovered; the only past king named was the ninth-century-BCE Assyrian king Shalmaneser III, son of Ashurnasirpal II.[25] The structure of the temple was completely removed, down to the (stone) foundations of the building; the innermost part of the temple, its *durgu*, was exposed. Specialists, *bārû*, men trained in extispicy and in inspecting building foundations, were brought in to inspect the lowest, and most important parts of Eḫulḫul. Since Ashurbanipal immediately states that he had the superstructure rebuilt to a height of thirty courses of bricks, without reference to relaying the foundations, the (stone) foundations laid during the time of Shalmaneser III must have been deemed sufficiently worthy for reuse; one inscription of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus, the so-called 'Eḫulḫul Cylinder Inscription' (see Appendix, no. 13) states that Ashurbanipal had Sîn's temple built anew directly on top of the foundations that Shalmaneser III had laid in the ninth century. As mentioned earlier, the temple's new superstructure was raised to a respectable height of thirty courses of bricks, which, according to at least one piece of royal correspondence,[26] was a fairly standard height for temples in the late Neo-Assyrian period. By the time of its completion, the new Sîn temple might have been 3.3–3.6 m high.

While Ashurbanipal's workmen removed the former temple and rebuilt its superstructure, the temple grounds to the north and east were greatly expanded.[27] From what can be gleaned from the LET Report (Rev. 48–50), which is badly damaged at this point, it appears that an area 350 (cubits) long (and) 72 (cubits) wide — that is, a plot of land measuring ca. 175 × 32.5 m — was incorporated into the temple complex. Because the area immediately beside Sîn's temple was substantially lower, it had to be raised by 130 courses of bricks. The estimated height, depending on the thickness of each course of bricks, could have ranged anywhere between 11.7 m and 14.3–15.6 m. Once the massive, new terrace was raised to the same height as the foundations of the Eḫulḫul temple laid by Shalmaneser III, workmen laid the foundations for the new part of the temple complex; these are reported to have been made from massive ashlar blocks hewn from the mountains (*ešqī abnī šadî danni*). At this point, Ashurbanipal boasts that he made the structure of the temple larger that it had been in the past. This seems to indicate that the building constructed in the newly-acquired area measuring 175 × 32.5 m was physically attached to the existing Eḫulḫul temple, whose superstructure had been raised to a height of thirty courses of bricks. Although it is not explicitly stated in any extant textual source, the new addition might have been a temple for the god Nusku (Emelamana), which he had constructed as a twin/mirror image of Sîn's temple.[28] Ca. 663–662 BCE, that is, at the time the LET Report was composed, the superstructure of the new building had not been completed. Further details about this expansion of the temple will be discussed below, under §3.2 (Emelamana).

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[25] Clearly other kings worked on the temple, but since it was traditional to name one and only one previous builder in a description report, clearly Shalmaneser III was regarded as the most famous of the earlier kings who had worked on Eḫulḫul. For a study of the selective nature of Assyrian building reports, see Novotny 2018; see also Novotny 2014a: 109-112.

[26] Parpola 1987: no. 264.

[27] The eastward direction is indicated by the expression *tīb šadê*, whereas the northward expansion is not. The text uses *ultu kutal āli*, "from the back of the city," which might indicate the north, rather than south, as that part of the city is the furthest away from Assyria Proper and its administrative capital Nineveh. It this proves correct, then one might tentatively propose that Eḫulḫul was located near the edge of the city's citadel, possibly in the northeastern quadrant. Given the (oral and) written tradition that the Paradise Mosque was constructed on top of the temple of the moon-god, and the fact that numerous stamped bricks of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus were found in trenches 35 DD and 33 GG and that steles of that king and his mother were reused in the structure of the mosque, it is not impossible that Eḫulḫul was located in the northeastern part of the mound (*höyük*).

As the superstructure was being completed, or nearing completion, Ashurbanipal had cedar, including a light-colored variety (*liāru*), imported from the Levant, Mount Lebanon and Mount Sirāra. Several kings of the Sea Coast aided in the acquisition and transport of the timber. Although the rulers who assisted are not named, most likely some of them were the same individuals who supplied his father Esarhaddon with timber and stone during the construction of a wing of the armory at Nineveh and who aided Ashurbanipal's troops with reestablishing Assyrian control over Egypt; twenty-two rulers are reported to have reaffirmed their loyalty to Assyria in 667 BCE. Although it is not known which kings of the Sea Coast contributed to the construction of Eḫulḫul, it is possible the Baʾalu of Tyre, Milki-ašapa of Byblos, Iakīn-Lû (Ikkilû) or Arwad, and Abī-Baʾal of Samisimurruna provided timber since Mount Lebanon and Mount Sirāra were in their spheres of influence. Beams of cedar (*erēnu*) were used to roof the temple, while its doors were manufactured from cypress (*šurmēnu*) and white cedar (*liāru*). The doors were decorated with (ornamented) bands of silver.

According to the LET Report (rev. 57–67), the interior of the temple, especially the main cult rooms, was lavishly decorated. The ante-cella (*bīt-papāḫi*) and cella (*atmanu*) of Sîn, the two most important parts of the building, received the most attention. Ashurbanipal reports that he had the cella clad with "seventy talents of a shiny *zaḫalû*-metal."[29] It is not known exactly what types of decorative objects were displayed in that room, but the massive amount of metal used to make this room shine brightly was almost certainly acquired during Ashurbanipal's second Egyptian campaign (664 BCE), principally from two obelisks that are reported to have been "cast with shiny *zaḫalû*-metal" and to have weighed 2,500 talents each.[30] The substantial donation might have been to thank Ḫarrān's tutelary deity for the support that he gave during the campaigns to Egypt.

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[28] Pongratz-Leisten 1995: 554 was the first person to suggest that Emelamana was a twin of Eḫulḫul. It is not impossible that Ashurbanipal built a ziggurat to the moon-god in the area north and east of Eḫulḫul. Because a temple-tower at Ḫarrān is known only from an inscription of Nabonidus written on a bowl, this is probably not the case; see §3.3 and Appendix, no. 16 for more details. Given the available textual evidence, Emelamana is the more logical choice.

[29] Ashurbanipal is also known to have fashioned a raised dais (*paramāḫu*) for the god Marduk in Babylon from bricks cast from fifty talents of *zaḫalû*-metal. For example, see Novotny and Jeffers 2018: Ashurbanipal 10: i 27-30.

[30] The two obelisks were removed from a temple at Thebes (possibly the Amun temple at Karnak). Some scholars suggest that the (seven-meter-tall) obelisks were solid metal and date to the reign of Tuthmosis III (1504–1450 BCE). For this opinion, see Desroches-Noblecourt 1951: 47-61; Aynard 1957: 23-25; Kitchen 1986: 394 (with n. 891); and Onasch 1994: 158. Note, however, Oppenheim 1969: 295 n. 13, who suggests that the obelisks in question were only metal plated.

Some of the metal acquired as booty from Thebes might have been used to fashion and plate apotropaic figures that guarded the temple's holiest rooms:[31] wild bulls (*rīmū*), long-haired heroes (*laḫmū*), and lion-headed eagles (*anzû*). A pair of wild bulls, whose limbs were cast with twenty talents of *ešmarû*-metal, were placed in the cella (*atmanu*), perhaps near Sîn's dais. A pair of lion-headed eagles were placed on the left and right of the door leading from the ante-cella (*bīt-papāḫi*) to the cella. Lastly, a pair of long-haired heroes, each holding a *šurinnu*-emblem with both of their hands, were stationed in the eastern gate of the ante-cella, possibly the entranceway that led from a courtyard into the ante-cella (*bīt-papāḫi*); one inscription states that Ashurbanipal has used thirty talents of *ešmarû*-metal to create them.

Lastly, with regard to Eḫulḫul's decoration, some of its walls were decorated with glazed-brick friezes. Ashurbanipal's inscriptions do not state whether this decoration was applied to the temple's interior, to its exterior, or both. With regard to the color of these bricks, they were glazed with a blue colorant (*uqnû*), which could range from pale blue to royal blue or indigo, and with a glaze made from 'obsidian' (*ṣurru*), which could be green, black, white, or red in color, all of which are attested in the archaeological record. The glazed bricks, the massive quantity of metal and metal-plated objects, including at least three pairs of protective figures, made Eḫulḫul a wonder to behold.

When everything was completed, Ashurbanipal had Sîn returned to his dais inside his temple. The god, probably together with his wife Nikkal, was paraded through the streets of Ḫarrān from his temporary residence to his temple during a boisterous celebration.[32] Despite the fact that inscriptions state that the king took the moon-god by the hand, it is unknown whether or not Ashurbanipal was physically present at Ḫarrān for Sîn's return to Eḫulḫul. Since the completion of the moon-god's temple appears to have been a major accomplishment, as suggested by the number of inscriptions which refer to building at Ḫarrān and by the fact that Ashurbanipal claims on several occasions to have been divinely appointed for this important task, it is highly likely that he personally attended the ceremonies, symbolically took the hand of the moon-god, and escorted him back into his cherished temple.[33] On the other hand, it is possible that he did not make the trip to Ḫarrān, but instead sent his *kuzippu*-garments to stand in for him;[34] it is also likely that his younger brother Aššur-etel-šamê-erṣetim-muballissu, who was then a *šešgallu*-priest of Sîn, might have stood in for him, had Ashurbanipal not attended. Upon entry to his temple, Sîn was presented with many offerings and numerous gifts. These large-scale events might have taken place sometime around Ashurbanipal's sixth or seventh regnal year (ca. 663–662 BCE); this conjectured date is based on the assumption that most of the metal used to decorate this temple came from booty taken from Thebes in 664 BCE.

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[31] For a conjectural reconstruction of the placement of the apotropaic figures in the gateways of Sîn's ante-cella and cella, see Novotny 2003: 143 fig. 5.

[32] Although it is not explicitly stated in any of Ashurbanipal's royal inscriptions, the divine occupants of Eḫulḫul were moved to a temporary residence prior to the demolition of the dilapidated temple. One possible location might have been the wooden temple that Esarhaddon had constructed on the outskirts of the city. That temple – which is mentioned in Parpola 1993: no. 174 – was used to stage at least one or two special coronation ceremonies and it might have also served as Sîn's home while Eḫulḫul was being torn down, rebuilt, and decorated. For this opinion, see Novotny 2003: 64-65.

[33] Note that Holloway 2002: 267 no. 22, 412 suggests that Ashurbanipal was physically present at the festivities.

[34] If this was the case, then the *kalû*-priest Urdu-Ea or his son Nabû-zēru-iddina might have attended this special religious occasion on Ashurbanipal's behalf and guaranteed the king's presence by bringing his *kuzippu*-garments to Ḫarrān. For the importance of *kuzippu*-garments of the king in rituals, see, for example, Pongratz-Leisten 1997: 247-248.

3.2 Emelamana[35]

Although construction on Eḫulḫul had come to an end, building at Ḫarrān was still ongoing. By 663 or 662 BCE, work on Nusku's temple, Emelamana, remained unfinished. By Ashurbanipal's sixth or seventh year as king, it appears that only the foundations of that temple, which might have been a twin or mirror image of Eḫulḫul, had been laid; this assumes that the foundations laid upon the 130-layer infill mentioned in the LET Report (rev. 50) actually refer to those of Nusku's new temple, rather than those of some other temple. Over the next couple of years, perhaps between 661 and 659 BCE (Ashurbanipal's eighth to tenth regnal years), (1) the mud-brick superstructure was completed, (2) the temple was roofed with cedar beams, (3) silver-banded doors of cedar and white cedar were hung in its gateways,[36] and (4) its interior was lavishly decorated.

Details about Emelamana's construction in Ashurbanipal's inscriptions are rather sparse and are generally combined with reports on the work on Eḫulḫul. For example, the 'Canonical First Summary Report' (see Appendix, no. 2), which is the earliest direct attestation for the work on this temple of Nusku in the reign of Ashurbanipal, states "inside it, I built Emelamana, the temple of the god Nusku, the exalted vizier, which no king of the past (who had come) before me had built," when describing the construction of the mud-brick superstructure. Interestingly, two prisms inscribed with the 'Canonical First Summary Report' state that Emelamana had been built previously.[37] The problem is coupled with the equally ambiguous "inside it" (*qerebšu*), as it is uncertain if the "it" refers to Eḫulḫul or to the temple complex. This apparent contradiction in the building history of Emelamana is not difficult to explain. As for the texts claiming that this temple of Nusku had been built by a(n unnamed) previous ruler, that tradition about Emelamana records that that temple had been part of Eḫulḫul and was physically inside it, that is, the cult rooms of Nusku and his wife Sadarnunna (see below, §3.3) were situated in a wing/section of Sîn's temple. An Eḫulḫul-incorporated Emelamana might have comprised the ante-cellas and cellas of Nusku and Sadarnunna, perhaps together with a few auxiliary rooms. When Shalmaneser III rebuilt Eḫulḫul, he would have undoubtedly also constructed Emelamana since that temple was inside Sîn's. Therefore, Nusku's temple had in fact been built by a previous king. As for the inscriptions stating that Emelamana had not been built previously, they also present the truth about that temple: no king before Ashurbanipal had built Nusku his own temple. In this case Emelamana, although being physically attached to Eḫulḫul, was regarded as a proper temple, and not just rooms in another, more important building. Although it was now a fully-fledged temple, Nusku's enlarged residence was still inside the Eḫulḫul temple complex. Although both traditions reflect some version of the truth, Ashurbanipal's scribes eventually decided on the latter tradition – the one claiming that Emelamana had not been built previously – since it enhanced the image of their royal patron. They were not wrong since he did construct an entirely new temple at

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[35] For further information and bibliography, see Novotny 2003: 160-182.

[36] It is certain that the metal plating of at least one of Emelamana's doors was inscribed. An archival copy of that text is known from tablet K 2822+ (see below in the Appendix, no. 8). That inscription records that some of the doors of Nusku's temple were plated with *zaḫalû*-metal, rather than silver.

[37] That version of so-called Canonical First Summary Report has *ša šar pāni maḫrīya ēpušu*, "which a king of the past (who had come) before me had built," rather than *ša šar pāni maḫrīya* ***lā*** *ēpušu*, "which no king of the past (who had come) before me had built." It is uncertain if the absence of the negative particle *lā* was intentional or not. For a more detailed study of this issue, see Novotny 2003: 161-171; see also Novotny and Jeffers 2018: 140 (note to Ashurbanipal 7: i 55′).

Ḫarrān. As for its ground plan, nothing about it is known. It has been occasionally suggested that it was built as a twin or mirror image of Eḫulḫul. Given that twin, double temples were common, that is not an unreasonable assumption.

Like Eḫulḫul, Emelamana was lavishly decorated. Five fragmentarily preserved tablets with archival copies of inscriptions written on the metal plating of objects made for Nusku's temple at Ḫarrān (see Appendix, nos. 6–10) provide a few pieces of information. Unfortunately, the most relevant portions of most of those texts are completely missing or heavily damaged so it is no longer possible to determine what objects Ashurbanipal commissioned for the newly enlarged Emelamana. It is known with certainty that he had a pair of metal (-plated) lion-headed eagles (*anzû*) set up in the entrance to Nusku's ante-cella (*bīt-papāḫi*)[38] and a reddish-gold-plated archway (*sillu*) or awning (*ṣillu*), which the king had created as a *kiplu*-decoration for the temple's *armādu* (meaning unknown).[39] If Emelamana was created as a twin or mirror image of Eḫulḫul, it is possible that Ashurbanipal also had wild bulls (*rīmū*) and long-haired heroes (*laḫmū*) stationed in important gateways. However, we must wait for further evidence to be able to determine whether or not that was the case.[40] Based on the number of archival copies of texts composed for Emelamana in Ashurbanipal's name, it appears that that Assyrian king had Nusku's newly-constructed temple at Ḫarrān very sumptuously decorated.

Once construction came to an end, Nusku was brought into his temple and placed on his dais, in his inner sanctum. The event was likely celebrated with (elaborate) festivities. It is unknown whether Ashurbanipal personally escorted Nusku (and his wife Sadarnuna) to his new home.

With the substantial increase in the size of the temple, Nusku's cult now required a much larger staff to tend to its day to day activities. Ashurbanipal appears to have transferred fifty to sixty people — including a baker (*āpiʾu*), two cupbearers (*rāb šāqê*), two cooks (*nuḫatimmū*), and two victuallers (*karkadinnū*) — from the temple of the goddess Ištar at Ḫuzīrīna to Emelamana to accommodate the greater needs of that temple in Ḫarrān.[41] No further details about daily life in that temple are known.

3.3 Egipar, Sadarnunna's temple, the akītu-house, and Ḫarrān's ziggurat[42]

From archival copies of inscriptions written on the metal plating of objects made and donated to the moon-god and his consort Nikkal (see Appendix, nos. 11–12), as well as on clay prisms deposited in structures of that city's temples (see Appendix, no. 3), we know that Ashurbanipal sponsored a few other building activities at Ḫarrān.

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[38] It is possible that a second pair of lion-headed eagles was placed in the Sadarnuna's ante-cella.

[39] The term *kiplu* seems to be a decoration with entwined or twisting decorative elements since the word is connected with the verb *kapālu*, which means "to roll up, to form coils." Although the term *armādu* is not otherwise attested, it might be a structural feature associated with the upper part or roof of a building. Moreover, it might be related to the verb *arāmu* ("to cover") or a variant form of the noun *ermu* (*erimtu* or *unindu*).

[40] It is possible that the building report of Sm 530+ (see below in the Appendix, no. 10) described the fashioning of an apotropaic figure. It is not sufficiently preserved to be able prove or disprove that tentative suggestion.

[41] A memorandum concerning this transfer is recorded on STT 406+ (Kataja and Whiting 1995: no. 91) where it says in ll. 1–2: "[The servants of] the goddess Ištar of Ḫuzīrīna, [which the king] had given [to] the god Nusku." For the opinion that the transfer of temple personnel was made to Emelamana, see Streck 2001: 633 §6; and Novotny 2003: 169-170.

[42] For further information and bibliography, see Novotny 2003: 154-160, 183-193.

Despite the lack of textual evidence, it is assumed that Ashurbanipal completely rebuilt and lavishly decorated the temples of the goddesses Nikkal and Sadarnunna, the consort's of Sîn and Nusku respectively, at Ḫarrān. Nikkal's place of worship, which went by the Sumerian ceremonial name Egipar (*giparu*-House), and Sadarnunna's temple, a structure whose Sumerian ceremonial name is no longer known, are presumed to have been situated inside Eḫulḫul and Emelamana respectively and are thought to have been constructed anew and decorated at the same time as the temples of Sîn and Nusku. Given the general lack of information in extant texts and the near-complete absence of Ḫarrān's principal temples in the archaeological record, this is mere speculation, the best we can do that this time. Given the fact that many Assyrian temples have double, side-by-side cellas, one for the principal occupant and one for the spouse, it is not unreasonable to assume that the places of worship of these two goddesses at Ḫarrān were any different, that is, the temples of Nikkal and Sadarnunna were rooms inside the temples of their consorts.

From the clay tablet Bu 89-4-26, 209 we know that Ashurbanipal donated at least one pair of gold-plated carrying poles to the goddess Nikkal. As the inscription states, these were used to carry Nikkal's divine image from her temple Egipar to the *akītu*-house, the New Year's Temple, and back to her dais. Given the fact that Ashurbanipal had Eḫulḫul completely rebuilt and lavishly decorated, it is assumed here that this Assyrian king had other metal and metal-plated objects fashioned for Nikkal. Unfortunately, none of these objects, nor any archival copy of the texts inscribed on them, survive today. It is also assumed here that Ashurbanipal had Sadarnunna's temple decorated.

The New Year's Temple, the *akītu*-house, of the moon-god[43] received attention from Ashurbanipal during the second half of his third decade as king; the work was certainly finished by 638 BCE, since that temple's completion is recorded in the Inscription from the Ištar Temple (IIT), a summary inscription of the king written sometime around 638 BCE, on unsculpted limestone wall slabs lining the walls of the Ištar temple Emašmaš at Nineveh. Few details about the project are known. The most detailed report about its construction comes from the building report of an inscription that was written on clay prisms deposited in its mud-brick structure. That text, which is now known only from an archival copy from Nineveh (K 2664+ = Edition L; see Appendix, no. 3), records that Sîn's *akītu*-house was completely rebuilt after (re)laying its (stone) foundations and that Ashurbanipal had it (lavishly) decorated with *zaḫalû*-metal. A fragmentarily preserved archival copy of one of the objects commissioned for that New Year's Temple (Sm 671; see Appendix, no. 10) gives validity to his boast that he had decorated that building's interior. Unfortunately, that single-column tablet discovered at Nineveh is not sufficiently preserved to be able to determine what type of object(s) Ashurbanipal had manufactured for the moon-god's *akītu*-house.

The building report of 'Edition L' provides one important piece of information about the New Year's Temple at Ḫarrān: Sîn's *akītu*-house was located inside the city, and not outside of it, as previously thought. Its exact position is not indicated and it is unknown if this festival temple was located inside the Eḫulḫul complex or in another district of the city, perhaps in the lower town, near one of the city gates, but still inside the city walls. It is not impossible that it was located at or near the Deir Kadhi, which is at the Gate of the Inn of the Olives.

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[43] The earliest attestation of the *akītu*-house at Ḫarrān dates back to the time of Sargon II. Its Sumerian ceremonial name, assuming it had one, is not known.

A bowl inscribed with an Akkadian text of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus reports that there was a ziggurat at Ḫarrān. Since that temple tower is mentioned only in that one inscription, it is unknown if that building existed prior to Nabonidus' reign, if it was constructed anew by that Neo-Babylonian ruler, or if the building actually existed at all (that is, the text's composer confused the cults of Sîn at Ḫarrān and Ur and assumed that the temple of the moon-god at Ḫarrān also had a ziggurat). Thus, given the absence of Eḫulḫul's ziggurat in other sources, both Assyrian and Babylonian, as well as in the archaeological record, nothing further can be said about that structure.

3. Conclusions

Given the complete lack of supporting archaeological evidence, as well as the fragmentary nature of some of the textual sources, it is difficult to know how accurate the proposals suggested here actually are. Nevertheless, based on plans of other Assyrian temples, it is not improbable that Ashurbanipal had Eḫulḫul rebuilt and enlarged as a double Eḫulḫul-Emelamana temple and that each 'twin' contained side-by-side cellas, one for the principal occupant (Sîn and Nusku respectively) and one for his consort (Nikkal and Sadarnunna respectively). What appears to be certain, whether Emelamana was built as an attached twin of Eḫulḫul or as a separate, detached temple, Nusku's place of worship at Ḫarrān was substantially enlarged by Ashurbanipal. This seems to be confirmed by the number of metal-plated objects that Ashurbanipal commissioned for it, including lion-headed eagles, as well as the sizable increase in its staff, which the king had transferred from the city of Ḫuzurina (modern Sultantepe).

It is hoped that this paper, whether scholars agree or disagree with my interpretations of the extant textual material, raises the profile of Assyrian building activities at Ḫarrān in Assyriological literature and non-scholarly resources, thereby placing Ashurbanipal's work on Eḫulḫul (and Emelamana) on equal footing as Nabonidus' building activities on the same temples. This important seventh-century-BCE construction program deserves more than a clause or sentence in such works.

Appendix: Translations of Relevant Sources

Sixteen passages from Akkadian inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurbanipal and the Neo-Babylonian ruler Nabonidus reporting on their building activities at Ḫarrān are provided here. See the bibliography in the notes to the most recent edition and study of the inscriptions. Further information about all of the texts translated here can be found in Novotny 2003, Novotny and Jeffers 2018, and Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020.

No. 1. Large Egyptian Tablets Building Report[44]

(Rev. 43–47) At that time, Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god S[în (...) that is i]nside the city Ḫarrān, which [S]halmaneser (III), son of Ashurnasirp[al (II), a king of the past (who had come) befo]re me, had built — tha[t] temp[le, which] had beco[me o]ld (and) whose walls [had buck]led, I completely cleared away its dilapidated section(s), [*exposed* its] foundatio[n(s), *and (thereby) discov*]*ered* its *surface*, its innermost core. I [raised up] the entirety of that temple thirty courses of brick [(and) I fashi]oned its brickwork.

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[44] Novotny 2003: 30-33, 88-94, 253-289; 2014b: no. 20. The translation is based on the forthcoming edition of the Large Egyptian Tablets, which is to appear in Novotny and Jeffers 2021; it is an updated version of the translations that appeared in Novotny 2003; 2014b.

(Rev. 48–50) To the east, [I] added to it [...] 350 (cubits) long (and) 72 (cubits) wide. From the rear of the city, I filled in 130 courses of bricks [...] inside the citadel. I laid its foundations with massive (blocks) of strong mountain stone. I [*secured*] its foundation (and) I made [*it*]s [structure] larger.

(Rev. 51–56) Tall cedars — whose trunk(s) g[rew thick (and) ta]ll within Mount Lebanon (lit. "city Lebanon") — (and) sweet scented cypress — (upon) which the god Adad *m*[*ade* (it) rai]n within Mount Sirāra (lit. "city Sirāra") — which the kings of the sea coast, servants who belonged to me, had cut do[wn at] my [com]mand (and) dragged with great difficulty from their mountains (through) difficult terrain [to the city Ḫ]arrān, I placed over Eḫulḫul, "The Dwelling of Joy," and (thereby) [secured (its) roo]fing. I fastened band(s) of silver on very tall doors of cypress (and) I [fixed] (them) in its [gate]ways.

(Rev. 57–61) At the beginning of my kingship, I made that temple in its entirety splen[did and I] completed (it). I [cl]ad the inner sanctum of the god Sîn, my lord, with seventy talents of shiny *zaḫalû*-silver. Two fierce wild bulls of silver, which were cast exactly the same, ... [...] — I skillfully c[ast] their limbs with twenty talents of *ešmarû*-metal [... I stationed (them) in the inner sanctum of the god Sîn] in order to gore (my) enemies (and) to trample m[y] foes.

(Rev. 62–65) Two long-haired heroes of silver, replica(s) of those of the sea, which are bearde[d, ...], wh[o] hold divine emblems with both of their hands, [...] — I cast their forms [with th]irty talents (and) I made (their) [appurte]nances splendid. [I installed t]hem in the eas[tern] gate of the cella [a]s constant petitioners for my life.

(Rev. 66–67) I [*complet*]*ely* surrounded it with a frieze (made) [with baked bricks] (colored with) obsidian (and) lapis lazuli. [I *finished* the w]ork of [that temple] in its entirety through the workmanship of the god Nudimmud.

(Rev. 68–69) I took [the god Sîn, m]y [lord, by the hand] and made him enter (into Eḫulḫul) during celebrations, (and) made [him] dw[ell on (his) ete]rnal [dais]. I offered [(sumptuous,) p]ure o[fferings] before him (and) pres[ented (him) with] my [gif]ts.

No. 2. Canonical First Summary Report[45]

(ii 29–43) Before my father was born (and) my birth-mother was created in her mother's wo[mb], the god Sîn, who created me to be king, named me to (re)build Eḫulḫul, saying: "Ashurbanipal will (re)b[uild] that temple [and] make me dwell therein upon [an e]ternal [dais." The word of the god S]în, which [he had spoken] in distant days, [he n]ow reve[aled to the peo]ple of a later generation. He allowed [the temple of the god Sîn — which] Shalmaneser (III), [son of Ashurnasirpal (II)], a king of the past (who had come) before [m]e, [had b]ui[lt] — to become old and he entrusted (its renovation) to me.

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[45] The 'Canonical First Summary Report' is chiefly known from inscriptions of Ashurbanipal on clay prisms (in chronological order, Prisms I, C, Kh, G, and T); it is also preserved on two clay tablets (K 3065 and Rm 589). See Novotny 2003: 13-25, 94-100, 290-303; 2014b, nos. 1-2; Novotny and Jeffers 2018: Ashurbanipal 5 (Prism I), 6 (Prism C), 7 (Prism Kh), 8 (Prism G) and 10 (Prism T). Line count and translation are based on Novotny and Jeffers 2018: Ashurbanipal 10; available online at www.oracc.org/rinap/rinap5/Q003709/ (last accessed 12 May 2020).

(ii 44–iii 4) I removed its dilapidated section(s) by the command of the gods Sîn (and) Nusku. I made its structure larger than the one in the days of the past. I built (and) completed (it) from its foundation(s) to its crenellations. Inside it, I built Emelamana, the temple of the god Nusku, the exalted vizier, which no king of the past (who had come) before me had built. I roofed [them] with long beams of cedar. I faste[ned] band(s) of silver on doors of white ceda[r] (and) I fixed (them) in their gateways.

(iii 5–12) In the inner sanctum of the god Sîn, my lord, I stationed two wild bulls of silver, which gor[e] my foes (to death). In a gateway of Eḫulḫul, I (also) stationed two long-haired heroes of *ešma*[*r*]*û*-metal, which gra[sp] divine emblems, keep safe my [r]oyal path, (and) bring in the yield of mountain and sea.

(iii 13– 14) I took the gods Sîn (and) Nusku by the hand, made (them) enter into (their respective temples), (and) made (them) sit on (their) eternal dais(es).

No. 3. Building Report of Edition L (K 2664+)[46]

(v 14–20) At that time, [(as for) the *akīt*]*u*-[house] of the god Sîn that is inside the city Ḫarrān (and) that had become old, [I] laid its foundation(s). I built (and) [comp]leted (it) from its foundation(s) to its crenel[lation]s. I decorated (it) with [shiny] *zaḫalû*-metal.

(vi 10–11) [An inscribed obj]ect fo[r the *akītu*-house of the god S]în [that is inside the city Ḫarr]ān.

No. 4. Canonical Second Summary Report[47]

(64–66a) [(As for) Eḫulḫ]ul, the temple of the god Sîn, which is in the city Ḫarrān (and) which [*the god Sîn* ...] in [*distant*] days entrusted (its renovation) to me, I built (and) co[mpleted (it) from] its foundation(s) to its crenellations. I clad [...]. Insi[de it], I bui[lt] Emelamana, the temple of <the god> Nusku, the exalted vizier.

(66b–67a) [In the inner sanctum of] the god Sîn, my lord, I stationed [two wild bulls of silver, which gore my foes (to death). In a gateway of] Eḫulḫul, I (also) stationed two long-haired heroes of *ešmarû*-metal, which gra[sp divine emblems, (keep safe my royal path, and) bring in the yield of mountain and sea].

(67b–68a) I built (and) completed the *akītu*-house, *the residen*[*ce of his lordly majesty*. I ...] with silver (and) go[ld ...].

(68b–69a) [...] *musukkannu*-[wood], a durable woo[d], I decorated (it) with shiny *za*[*ḫa*]*l*[*û*]-metal, [... (and) re]ddish [gold. ... I] set up [...] the god Sîn, m[y] lord, [...].

(69b–70a) (As for) the inner sanctum of the go[d Nusku, the] exalted [vi]zier, [the one who intercedes on] my [be]half, the one who reminds [(...)] the god Sîn, my lord, I *inla*[*id* (it)] with silver.

(70b–72a) [(As for ...)] ..., which to cause lightning to strike [...], I erected fierce [*lion-headed eagles in the ... of*] Emelamana, the temple of the god Nusku, the exalted vizier, on the right and lef[t. ...].

(72b) [I too]k [the gods Sîn (and) Nusku by the hand], made (them) enter into (their respective temples), (and) made (them) sit on (their) e[te]rnal dais(es).

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[46] Novotny 2003: 33-35, 183-192, 224-230, 381-385; 2014b: no. 3. The translation is based on the forthcoming edition of the Edition L, which is to appear in Novotny and Jeffers 2021.

[47] Novotny 2003: 25-27, 100-106, 303-306; Novotny and Jeffers 2018: Ashurbanipal 23; available online at www.oracc.org/rinap/rinap5/Q003722/ (last accessed 12 May 2020). The translation is based on Novotny and Jeffers 2018.

No. 5. Eḫulḫul Display Inscription K 8759+[48]

(Rev. 1) On the right and on the left of the cella of Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god [Sîn, ...].

(Rev. 14) [(This is) what is (written) upon the lio]n-headed ea[gles of Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god Sîn of the city Ḫarrān].

No. 6. Emelamana Display Inscription K 2803+[49]

(Rev. 10´) (This is) what is (written) [u]pon the ... [of Emelamana, the temp]le of the god Nusku of the city Ḫarrān.

No. 7. Emelamana Display Inscription K 2813+[50]

(Obv. 24–27) [I had *an archway* of red]dish [gold made] whose weight amounts to such and such, a *kiplu* appurtenance of the gate [(...) of Emelamana which is in]side the city Ḫarrān, [m]y lord, (and) I made (it) shine like daylight. [...] I made (it) shine *like* the sun ... and made (it) bright like daylight. [...] … I made (it) *as* an appurtenance of Emelamana.

(Rev. 20) [(This is) what is (written) u]pon the ... of Emelamana, the temple of the god Nusku o[f the city Ḫarrān].

No. 8. Emelamana Display Inscription K 2822+[51]

(Obv. 13´–15´) I had doors ma[d]e from long cedar (beams), whose fragrance is sweet, *with* … [... I fastened (on them)] band(s) of shiny *z[aḫ]alû*-metal, which is [b]right like [the da]y through the workmanship of the god Kusiba[nda], (and) I f[ixed (them) in its gateways] in the cella of Emelamana, the seat of his ... that is inside the city Ḫarrān.

(Rev. 18´) [(This is) what is (written) upon the doors of Emelamana, the temple of the god Nusku of the city Ḫarrān].

No. 9. Emelamana Display Inscription K 9143[52]

(Rev. 9´–10´) That which (is) upon the lion-headed eagle[s ...] that are stat[ioned] in front of the cella [...].

(Rev. 11´–14´) Upon the lion-headed eagles, that which (is) up[on ...]. The praise and ... [...] ... [... That wh]ich (is) in the lines (of text) on the lion-he[aded eagles ...] ... [...].

No. 10. Emelamana Display Inscription Sm 530+[53]

(Obv. 24–29) [I had ... made] whose weight [amoun]ts to such and such, [...] ... [...] like a flame [... the d]esires of the king, the one who reveres him, [... *that bu*]*rns* like a fire [...] I made (them) [*as* ...].

(Rev. 13) [(This is) what is (written) upon the... of Emelamana, the temple of] the god Nusku of the city Ḫarrān.

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[48] Pongratz-Leisten 1995; Novotny 2003: 35-37, 140-142, 231-233, 373-374. The translations of nos. 5-12 are based on forthcoming editions of the Ḫarrān texts of Ashurbanipal that will appear in Novotny and Jeffers 2021.

[49] Novotny 2003: 38-39, 180, 236-239, 386-387.

[50] Novotny 2003: 39, 176-178, 239-241, 375.

[51] Novotny 2003: 39-40, 178-180, 242-244, 388-389.

[52] Novotny 2003: 40-41, 174-176, 244-246, 376.

[53] Novotny 2003: 41-42, 180-181, 246-248, 390-391.

No. 11. Egipar Display Inscription Bu 89-4-26, 209[54]

(Obv. 19–24) I had as many as such and such poles of *šaššūgu*-wood made, wood pieces of equal size whose strength was very great. I inlaid the(ir) top and bottom (ends) with reddish gold amounting to such and such weight an[d] (thus) I made thei[r c]aps shine like daylight. I [*established*] (this) *wor*[*k*] for her divinity for lasting years (and) for long into the distant future in order to carry around her great divinity whenever she goes forth from the *akītu*-house.

(Rev. 22) [T]his is what is (written) upon the poles of the goddess Ningal.

No. 12. Akītu-house Display Inscription Sm 671[55]

(Rev. 5´) [(This is) what is (written) upon ... of] the *akītu*-house of the god Sîn of the city Ḫarrān.

No. 13. Nabonidus Eḫulḫul Cylinder Inscription[56]

(i 7–12a) (With regard to) Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god Sîn, which is inside the city Ḫarrān, in which the god Sîn, the great lord, has occupied the residence of his happiness since distant days: His (Sîn's) heart became angry with the city and that temple and he raised up a barbarian horde (the Medes), and it destroyed that temple and turned it into ruins.

(i 12b–20) During my legitimate reign, the god Sîn, the great lord, out of love for my royal majesty, became reconciled towards the city and that temple (and) had mercy. At the beginning of my eternal kingship, he showed me a dream. The god Marduk, the great lord, and the god Sîn, the light of heaven and earth, were both standing (and) the god Marduk spoke with me, (saying): "Nabonidus, king of Babylon, carry bricks using the horse(s) of your (royal) vehicle, (re)build Eḫulḫul, and enable the god Sîn, the great lord, to take up residence in his dwelling place inside it."

(i 21–25) I spoke reverently to the Enlil of the gods, the god Marduk: "(As for) that temple whose (re)building you have commanded, a barbarian horde (the Medes) is all around it and its forces are powerful." The god Marduk spoke with me, (saying): "(As for) the barbarian horde (the Medes) that you spoke of, it, its land, and the kings who march at its side will not exist."

(i 26–29) When (my) third year arrived, they had Cyrus (II), king of the land Anšan, a young servant of his (Astyages'), rise up against him (Astyages), and he (Cyrus) scattered the extensive barbarian horde (the Medes) with his small body of troops. He seized Astyages (Ištumegu), king of the barbarian horde (the Medes), and took him to his land as a captive.

(i 30–32) The word of the great divine lord, the god Marduk, and the god Sîn, the light of heaven and earth, whose command(s) cannot be changed — by their exalted command, I became frightened, worried, (and) anxious, and my face was haggard.

(i 33–40) I was not lazy, negligent, (or) careless. I raised up my extensive troops from the land (of the city) Gaza (on) the border of Egypt (and) the Upper Sea on the other bank of the Euphrates River to the Lower Sea — kings, nobles, governors, and my extensive troops, whom the deities Sîn, Šamaš, and Ištar, my lords, had entrusted to me — to (re)build Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god Sîn, my lord, the one who marches at my side, which is inside the city Ḫarrān, which Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, son of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, a ruler who came before me, had built.

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[54] Novotny 2003: 37-38, 154-160, 233-236, 375.

[55] Novotny 2003: 42, 191, 249-250, 377.

[56] Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: Nabonidus 28; available online at www.oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/Q005425/ (last accessed 12 May 2020); see also Nabonidus 29. The translations of nos. 13-16 are from Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020.

(i 41–ii5a) In a favorable month, on an auspicious day that the gods Šamaš and Adad had revealed to me through divination, using the wisdom of the gods Ea and Asalluḫi, through the craft of the incantation priest, (and) with the craft of the god Kulla, the lord of foundation(s) and brickwork, during joyous celebrations, I laid its foundations in silver, gold, a selection of precious stones, (and) crushed pieces of wood (and) cedar aromatics, (precisely) on the foundation(s) of Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, who had seen the foundation(s) of Shalmaneser (III), son of Ashurnasirpal (II), and (thereby) I secured its brickwork.

(ii 5b–9) I blended its *šallaru*-plaster with beer, wine, oil, (and) honey, and mixed (it into) its revetment. I made its structure stronger than that of the kings, my ancestors, and had its construction more expertly executed. I built that temple anew from its foundation(s) to its crenellations and completed its construction.

(ii 10–13) I had immense beams of cedar, (which were) grown on Mount Amanus, stretched out over it (for its roof). I had doors of cedar, whose scent is sweet, installed in its gates. I had its walls clad with silver and gold and made (them) radiate like the sun.

(ii 14–17) I stationed a wild bull of shiny *zaḫalû*-metal, which aggressively gores my foes (to death), in his (Sîn's) inner sanctum. I firmly planted two long-haired heroes of *ešmarû*-metal, who overwhelm my enem(ies), in the Gate of the Rising Sun, (on) the right and left.

(ii 18–21) I took the deities Sîn, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna, my lords, by the hand, (leading them out) of Šuanna (Babylon), the city of my royal majesty, and I had (them) reside inside the residence of (their) happiness during joyous celebrations.

(ii 22–25) I offered pure, sumptuous offerings before them (and) presented (them) with my gifts. I filled Eḫulḫul with joy and (then) made the radiance of the city Ḫarrān, to its full extent, shine like the appearance of the moon.

No. 14. Nabonidus Ḫarrān Stele[57]

(iii 17b–20a) I mustered the people of the land of Akkad and Ḫatti, from the border of Egypt (and) the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, which the god Sîn, king of the gods, had placed into my hands.

(iii 20b–24) I built Eḫulḫul, the temple of the god Sîn, anew (and) completed its construction. I took the deities Sîn, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna by the hand, (leading them out) of Šuanna (Babylon), the city of my royal majesty, and I had (them) enter (and) reside on their eternal dais(es) during joyous celebrations.

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[57] Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: Nabonidus 47; available online at www.oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/Q005444/ (last accessed 12 May 2020).

No. 15. Adad-guppi Stele[58]

(ii 13–21a) Nabonidus, (my) only son, my own offspring, carried out the forgotten cultic rites of the deities Sîn, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna to perfection. He built Eḫulḫul anew and completed its construction. He made the city Ḫarrān more perfect than before and returned (it) to its place. He took the deities Sîn, Ningal, Nusku, and Sadarnunna by the hand, (leading them out) of Šuanna (Babylon), the city of his royal majesty, and had (them) reside inside in the city Ḫarrān, in Eḫulḫul, the residence of their happiness, during joyous celebrations.

No. 16 Stone Bowl Inscription (SM 899.2.282)[59]

(1–2a) For the god Sîn, king of the gods, the one who resides [in the great] hea[vens, lord of Eḫulḫul, which is inside the city Ḫarrān, my lord]: Nabonidus, king of Babylon, the one who provides for E[sagil and Ezida, am I].

(2b–6) I ma[de a *kallu*-bowl and] a *šulpu*-vessel of *alallu*-stone for carrying water for the [(washing of) hands in ...], the ziggurat of Eḫulḫul, which is inside Ḫarrān [and, as an emblem of his (Sîn's)] great [divinity], who daily and constantly [speaks his] wo[rd(s)] in the heavens and (who) does no[t go back] on his promise, [I ...].

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[58] Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: Nabonidus 2001; available online at www.oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/Q005471/ (last accessed 12 May 2020).

[59] Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: Nabonidus 52; available online at www.oracc.org/ribo/babylon7/Q005449/ (last accessed 12 May 2020).

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KAREN RADNER, SHELER AMELIRAD AND EGHBAL AZIZI
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg and Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj

A first radiocarbon date for the Iron Age cemetery of Sanandaj

Dating an elite burial in the Assyrian province of Parsua

1. Introduction

There are hardly any ^{14}C dates available for western Iran in the Neo-Assyrian period. This paper presents a new radiocarbon date from a burial (A10) of the Zagros Town cemetery in Sanandaj (Kurdistan Province, Iran) whose relatively rich grave goods include a bow-shaped, or semi-circular, bronze fibula with seven block segments that has a virtual duplicate in a piece excavated at Lachish.

2. Three elite burials at the Zagros Town cemetery of Sanandaj

In November 2008, an Iron Age cemetery was discovered by chance during construction work along the road leading from Sanandaj to Hasanabad, west of Sanandaj's Zagros Town district on a slope of the Abidar mountain range (35° 17′ 15″ N, 46° 58′ 59″ E; 1,628 m above sea level; Fig. 1). As a result, the Cultural Heritage Department of Sanandaj conducted rescue excavations and unearthed 28 burials. A report on the burials and their finds was published in 2012, focusing in particular on the three richest burials A6, A10 and A12,[1] whose human remains were then discussed in a 2018 study.[2]

These three burials stand out as a group from the rest of the graves not only because of their much richer and more numerous burial goods but also because of the position in which their occupants were laid to rest. They were placed in a supine position, lying on their back with extended legs, all in the same orientation (approximately E-W, with the head in the west), whereas the other bodies buried on the cemetery were laid, in various orientations, on their sides with flexed legs.[3] Also because of their proximity to each other (Fig. 2), it is therefore reasonable to assume that the three richer burials are relatively close in date. Their analysis of the finds from the Zagros Town cemetery led Sheler Amelirad, Bruno Overlaet and Ernie Haerinck to conclude that

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[1] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012.
[2] Sołtysiak, Azizi and Tawhidi 2018.
[3] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 44; Sołtysiak, Azizi and Tawhidi 2018: 81.

DOI: 10.13173/9783347114776_95

> "Although some of the tombs might belong to the Early Iron Age, the three best documented tombs of the cemetery (tombs A6, A10 and A12) are to be dated between the 8th–6th c. BC, most probably mainly in the 7th c. BC."[4]

The most important arguments for this dating derived, on the one hand, from the six cylinder seals from burial A12 (five made of faience and one probably of limestone, see below §3), as these can be assigned to Dominique Collon's Neo-Assyrian-period groups of "Syrian and Assyrian linear style" and "faience seals," although this does not allow a more narrow dating than to the 9th to 7th centuries BCE.[5] On the other hand, the bronze fibula from burial A10 can be assigned to a type that Friedhelm Pedde dates to the 7th century and the early 6th century BCE.[6]

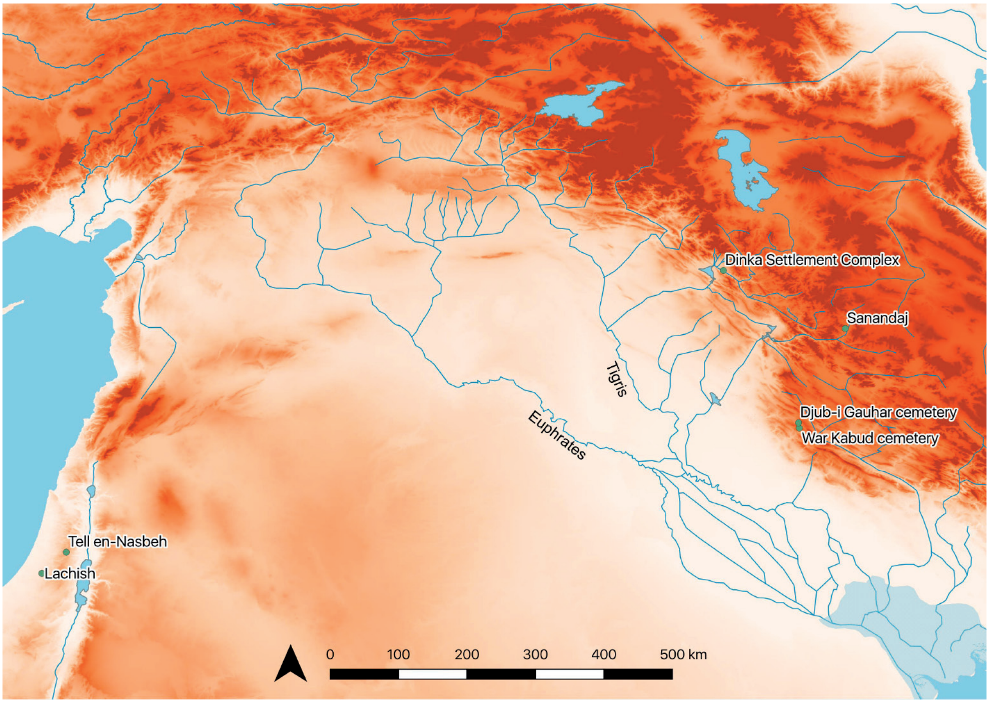
Dinka Settlement Complex
Sanandaj
Tigris
Euphrates
Djub-i Gauhar cemetery
War Kabud cemetery
Tell en-Nasbeh
Lachish
0
100
200
300
400
500 km

Fig. 1: Map indicating the archaeological sites discussed in this paper. Prepared by Andrea Squitieri (LMU Munich).

3. Burial A10

The focus of this paper is burial A10. Protected by a covering made of several flat, unworked stone slabs, the bodies of two adults had been laid to rest (Fig. 3). To quote from

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[4] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 57.

[5] Collon 2001; see Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 55-56.

[6] Pedde 2000: 140, 369 table 24 (type B3).

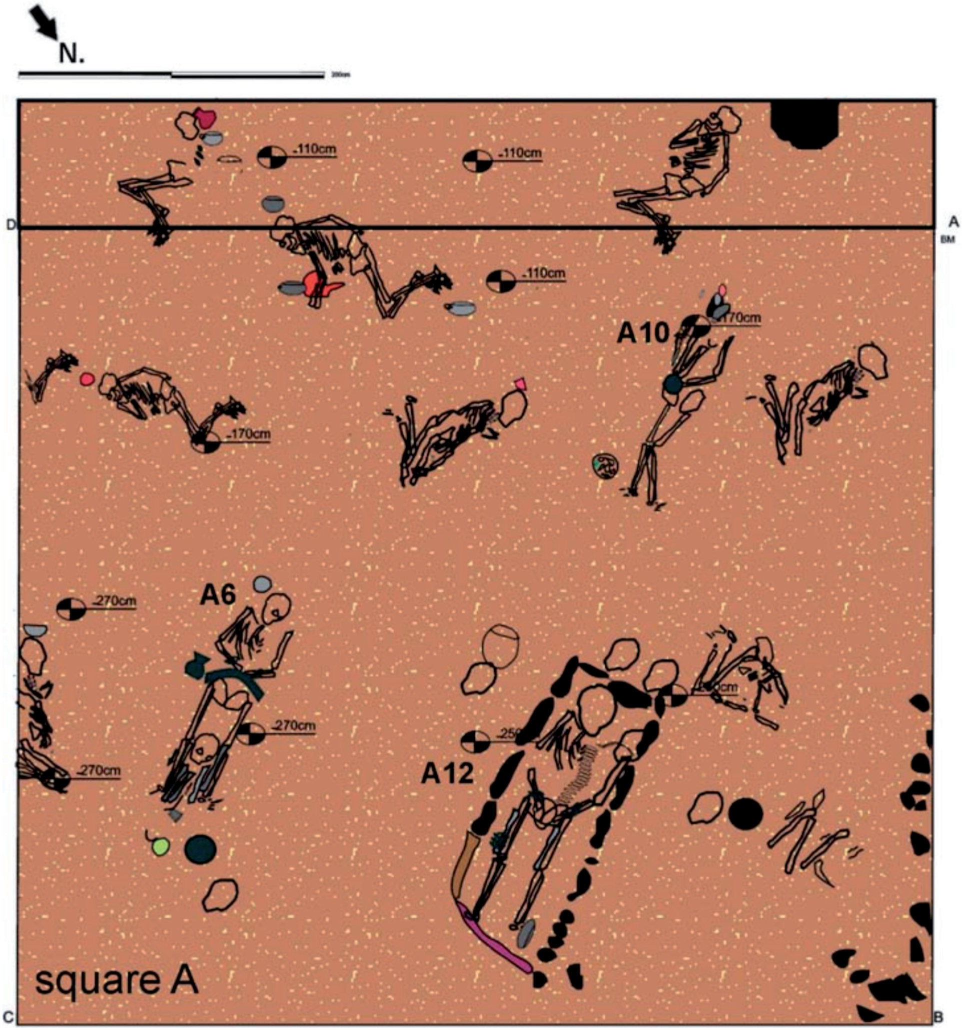

Fig. 2: The positions of the burials A6, A10 and A12 in the excavation area A of the Zagros Town cemetery at Sanandaj. Photograph courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj.

the 2018 report, which was able to add substantially to the information given in the 2012 article,[7]

> "Burial A10 included two skeletons, positioned one on top of the other. The lower one (A) was partially exposed to reveal some areas of cranium and perhaps the humerus that appeared to have been dislocated post mortem. The cranium belonged to an adult individual, with significantly obliterated sutures, and no reliable sex assessment was possible

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[7] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 45.

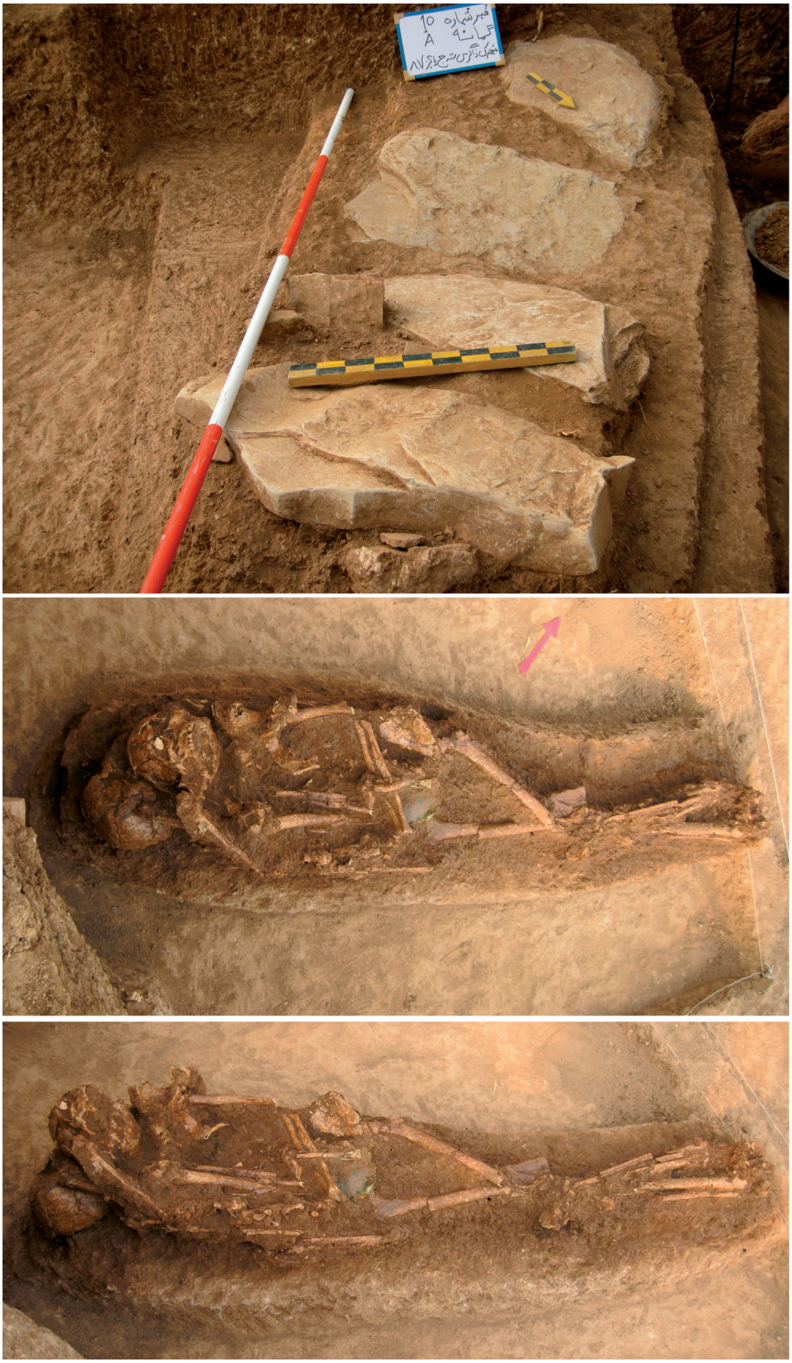

Fig. 3: Burial A10. Top: before the removal of the stones covering the grave. Middle: the exposed burial seen from the top. Bottom: the exposed burial seen from the side; note the two bodies lying on top of each other. Photographs courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj.

(glabella 2, supraorbital margins 3). The upper skeleton (B) belonged most likely to a female (vertical head diameter of left humerus 40.6 mm), although cranial morphology was ambiguous and the left radius was relatively long (248 mm). However, the total length of the skeleton was c. 150 cm, a value perhaps slightly underestimated due to some post-mortem dislocation of cranium that was placed higher than remaining part of the skeleton."[8]

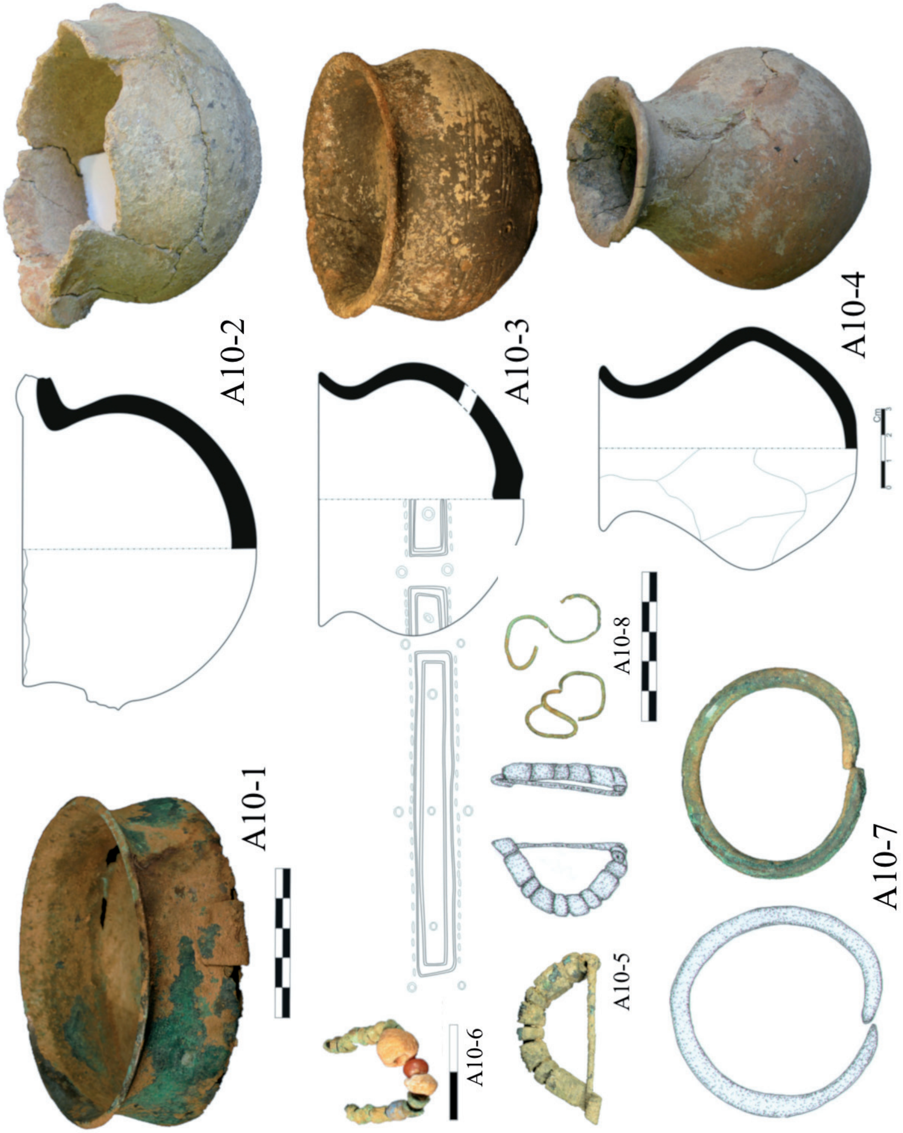

Fig. 4: The inventory of grave goods deposited in burial A10. Photographs courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj, drawings by Ms Zahra Ghafari.

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[8] Sołtysiak, Azizi and Tawhidi 2018: 81.

The burial goods that accompanied the couple included three pottery vessels, a bronze bowl, a bronze fibula and some jewellery (Figs. 4-6). While these grave goods are less opulent than those of the nearby burials A6[9] (which included a bronze belt and two bronze vessels) and A12[10] (which included a finely decorated bronze bowl and a great many personal adornments, among them a gold bead and six cylinder seals that were apparently used as beads[11]), they are still much richer than those of the other burials.

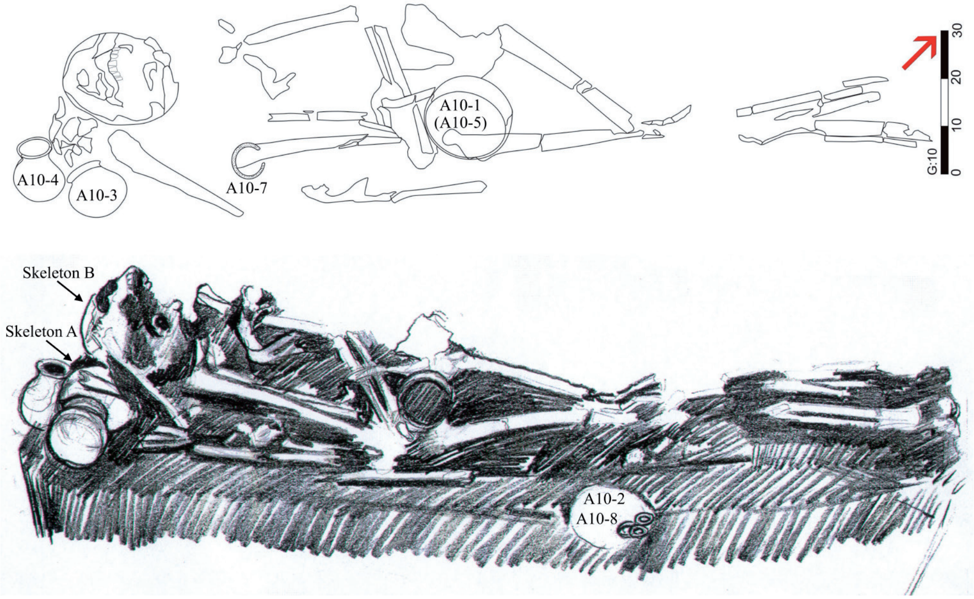

Fig. 5: The position of the two bodies and of the larger grave goods in burial A10. Drawings by Mr Mahdi Ziaedini.

The fibula (A10-5; Fig. 7, top) was found on top of the female skeleton B, inside the bronze bowl (A10-1) placed on the woman's pelvis (Fig. 6). It is completely preserved (albeit covered by a thick patina) and belongs to a type that Friedhelm Pedde termed "Bogenfibeln mit Blocksegmenten" (B3), meaning bow-shaped, or semi-circular, fibulae with block segments.[12] The fibula from A10 has seven such segments sitting along its bow, of which the two outermost elements (A and G) are the largest ones and square in section while all others are round. The narrow central segment (D) is flanked by two wider elements that are incised with deep grooves (C and E) while the two next segments (B and F) correspond in size to the central piece; these three elements appear to be undecorated. The square final elements seem to be decorated with five dots arranged in the way they would be on the faces of dice: on the segment next to the spring of the pin, the central one of these five dots is visible despite the

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[9] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 44-45, 65-67 with pls. 6-8.

[10] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 45, 71-81 with pls. 12-22.

[11] Thus also Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 56.

[12] Pedde 2000: 139-140.

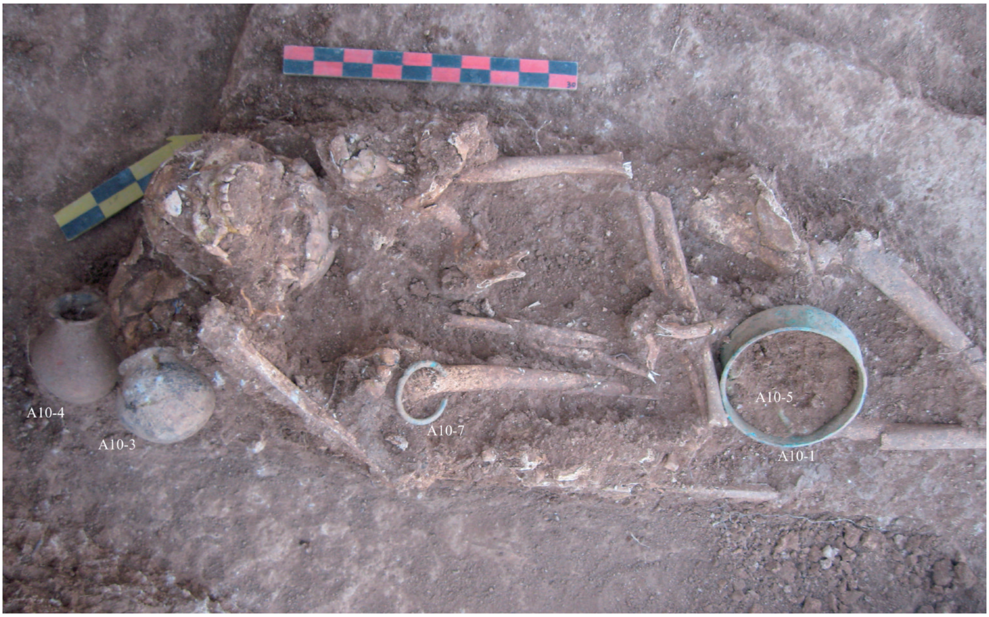

Fig. 6: Photograph showing the position of the larger grave goods in burial A10 during excavation. Note in particular the fibula A10-5 visible inside the bronze bowl A10-1. Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj.

disfiguring bronze patina. The catch is made to look like a human hand (without thumb) that wraps its fingers protectively around the pin's sharp point.

As Sheler Amelirad, Bruno Overlaet and Ernie Haerinck have already noted,[13] there are two close parallels known for this fibula, both from the territory of the kingdom of Judah: one example was found in Lachish (Fig. 7, middle),[14] and the other at Tell en-Nasbeh (Fig. 7, bottom),[15] close to Jerusalem. While the fibula from Tell en-Nasbeh has nine, instead of seven, block segments (with a ridged central element and two narrow undecorated ones in the centre instead of only one narrow undecorated segment), the piece from Lachish corresponds in every detail to the Sanandaj fibula and is virtually its duplicate.

As the distribution map of Pedde's type B3 shows (Fig. 8, with the grey dot in the east added to mark the new find from Sanandaj), these fibulae are very well attested especially in the core region of the Assyrian Empire and all its territories. It is likely due to the Empire's agency (be that increased transregional trade, or the dispersal of population groups through its policy of mass deportations[16]) that two virtually identical examples of a very distinctive fibula sub-type ended up on either end of the Empire.

The fibula A10-5 was found inside a small, undecorated bronze bowl with a diameter of 11.3 cm and a height of 4.7 cm (Fig. 9, top). With its steep concave walls, sharp shoulder and

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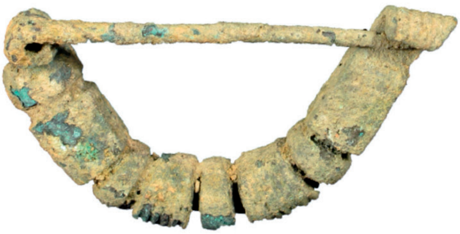
[13] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 48.

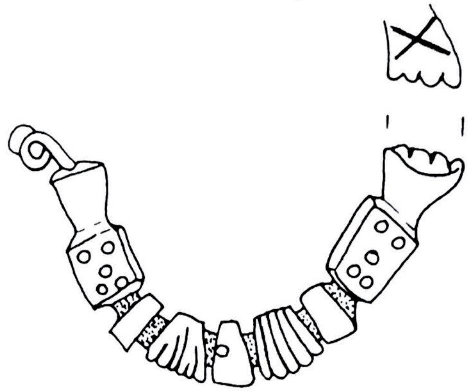
[14] Pedde 2000: 149, pl. 16: no. 209.

[15] Pedde 2000: 147, pl. 16: no. 212.

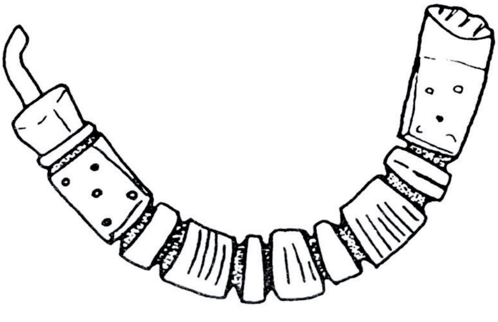
[16] For the latter, see most recently Radner 2018.



Sanandaj



Lachish
(Pedde 2000: no. 209)



Tell en-Nasbeh
(Pedde 2000: no. 212)

Fig. 7: The fibula A10-5 from the Zagros Town cemetery at Sanandaj and parallel pieces from Lachish and Tell en-Nasbeh. Photograph courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj; drawings reproduced from Pedde 2000: pl. 16. Not to scale.

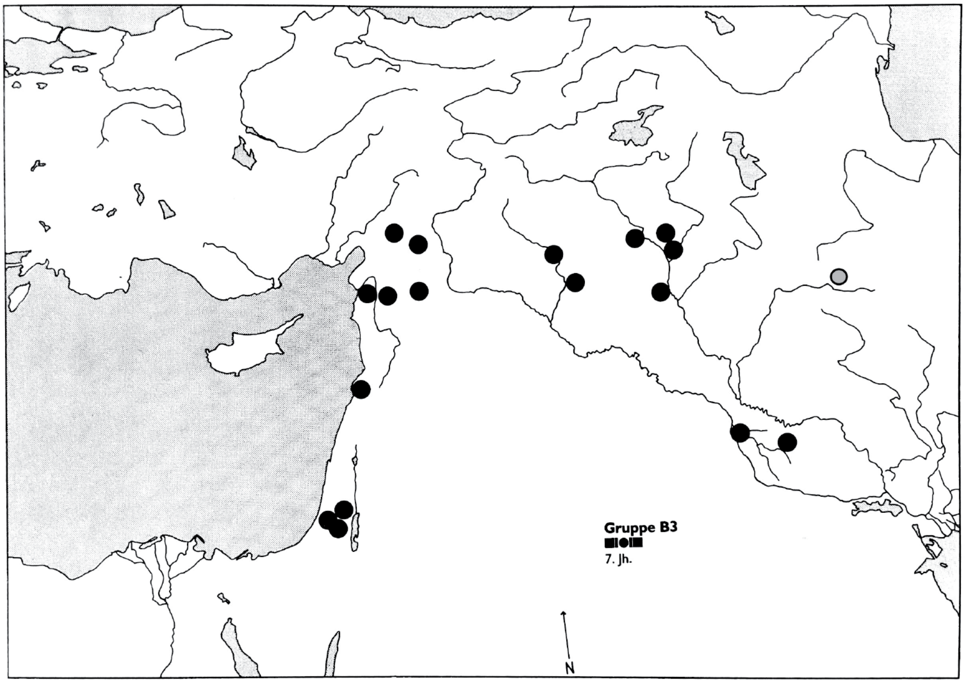


Fig. 8: Distribution of Friedhelm Pedde's fibula type B3 ("Bogenfibeln mit Blocksegmenten"), with the new addition of Sanandaj (grey dot). Adapted from Pedde 2000: 141 Karte 15.

rounded base,[17] this deep carinated bowl has close parallels in two Iron Age III cemeteries in Pusht-i Kuh (literally "behind the mountain"; Ilam Province, Iran), the western part of Luristan to the west of the Kabir Kuh mountain range, the last major ridge of the Zagros before reaching the Mesopotamian lowlands.[18] As noted by Sheler Amelirad, Bruno Overlaet and Ernie Haerinck,[19] two pieces from the cemeteries of War Kabud and Djub-i Gauhar (Jub-e Gowhar) can be compared to the bowl from A10. The bowl from War Kabud (burial A37; Fig. 9, middle)[20] is slightly larger, with a diameter of 12.7 cm and a height of 5.3 cm, but constitutes a close match for the Sanandaj specimen in the overall proportions. With a diameter of 13.8 cm and a height of only 4.5 cm, the bowl from Djub-i Gauhar (burial 48; Fig. 9, bottom)[21] is not quite as deep as these two bowls. A hole in the Sanandaj bowl had been mended by applying a small sheet of bronze at some point before the piece came to be deposited in the grave, where it was placed on the pelvis of the female skeleton B (Fig. 6).

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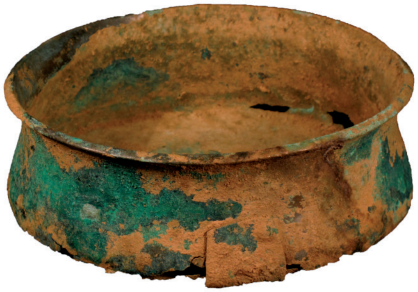
[17] Not a "flat base," as stated in Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 47.

[18] Haerinck and Overlaet 2006.

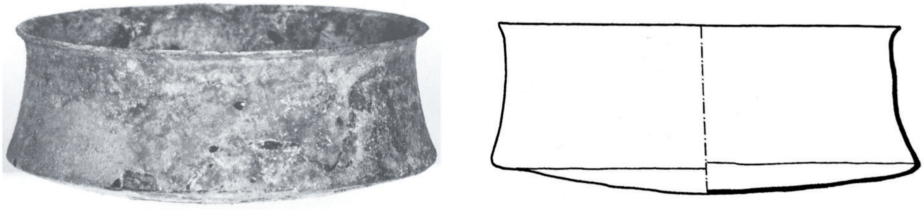
[19] Amelirad, Overlaet and Haerinck 2012: 47.

[20] War Kabud A 37-4 = WK 65/360. For the grave and its inventory, see Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: 12, pl. 19 (burial A37); for the bowl, see Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: 61, 88, pl. 138 (A37-4). The bowl was not among the specimens that underwent alloy and composition analysis using proton-induced x-ray emission (PIXE) spectrometry at the Museum Applied Science Center for Archaeology (MASCA), University of Pennsylvania (for results see Fleming et al. 2006).

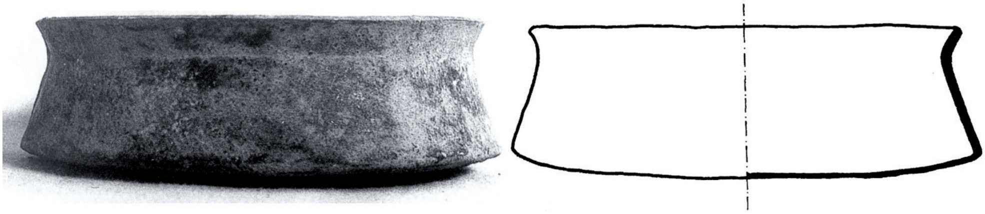
[21] Djub-i Gauhar 48-3 = DjG 77/473. For the grave and its inventory, see Haerinck and Overlaet 1999: pl. 33 (burial 48); for the bowl, see Haerinck and Overlaet 1999: 31 with fig. 15: 7, pl. 77b (48-3).



Sanandaj A10-1 h = 4.7 cm; ∅ 11.3 cm



War Kabud A37-4 =WK 65/360 h = 5.3 cm; ∅ 12.7 cm



Djub-i Gauhar 48-3 = DjG 77/473 h = 4.5 cm; ∅ 13.8 cm

Fig. 9: The bowl A10-1 from the Zagros Town cemetery at Sanandaj and parallel pieces from the Iron Age III cemeteries War Kabud and Djub-i Gauhar (Jub-e Gowhar) in Pusht-i Kuh (western Luristan). Photograph of A10-1 courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj. Photograph and drawing of War Kabud A37-4 reproduced from Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: pls. 19, 138. Photograph and drawing of Djub-i Gauhar 48-3 reproduced from Haerinck and Overlaet 1999: pls. 33, 77b. Not to scale.

4. A radiocarbon date for burial A10

When Karen Radner visited the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj in November 2019, the three authors of this paper came together to discuss the possibility of radiocarbon-dating the group of elite burials from the Zagros Town cemetery. This was considered important as there are very few Iron Age ^{14}C dates available for Western Iran while the correlation of the regional chronologies with those used on the other side of the Zagros in Iraq, and beyond, is fraught with difficulties. After their discovery, the three burials had been relocated to the museum where they now form the centrepiece of the newly designed Iron Age section, and therefore sampling them is a logistical and administrative challenge as it requires partially dismantling the purpose-built glass-metal installations displaying and protecting the individual burials.[22] We therefore decided to sample only one burial (by removing a tooth) and prioritised A12 due to the fibula with its narrow date range. It was clear from the outset that the resultant radiocarbon date range was highly likely to fall into the time of the "Hallstatt Plateau," a flat area on the radiocarbon graph affecting the dating of samples from the period c. 800–400 BCE.[23]

Once a molar from the lower jaw of skeleton B had been sampled and exported to Germany by Sheler Amelirad, it was first submitted to the Department of Archaeogenetics at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena for DNA extraction and inclusion in its database,[24] according to the wishes expressed by Jebrael Nokandeh, General Director of the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), and Yousef Hassanzadeh, Head of the Research Center of the National Museum of Iran, during a meeting in November 2019 in Teheran. Subsequently, in March 2020, the molar was sent to the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie at Mannheim where collagen was extracted and prepared for radiocarbon analysis. As expected, the sample yielded a long range of possible

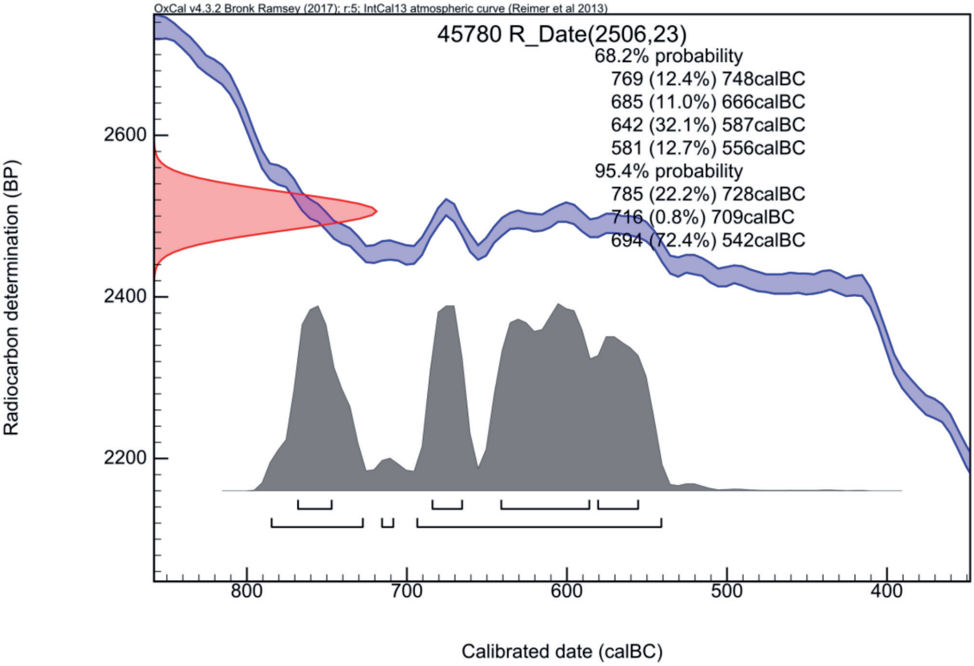


Fig. 10: Calibrated radiocarbon dating obtained from a molar of skeleton B of burial A10. Calibration software OxCal 4.3.2. Prepared by the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, Mannheim.

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[22] These showcases are depicted in Sołtysiak, Azizi and Tawhidi 2018: 82 fig. 1.

[23] van der Plicht 2004.

[24] Our thanks are due to Philip Stockhammer (LMU Munich / Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena) for making the necessary arrangements at short notice.

dates from 769–556 calBCE (68.2% probability) and 785–542 calBCE (95.4% probability), respectively; within the latter range, a dating to 694–542 calBCE has a 72.4% probability (Fig. 10).

In the wider region, this date has a relatively close match at Gird-i Bazar (Dinka Settlement Complex) in the Peshdar Plain in the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq (located in the Province of the Palace Herald in the Neo-Assyrian period). There, a date range of 730–431 calBCE (68.2% probability) and 748–409 calBCE (95.4% probability), respectively (Fig. 11, top), was derived from the femur of a human body deposited in the uppermost filling of a well located inside a private house (Building I), which must have been abandoned by that time.[25] Also at the Dinka Settlement Complex, but on the citadel of Qalat-i Dinka, radiocarbon analysis of a human bone from Grave 110, one of the burials excavated in 2019 around the monumental Building P,[26] produced ranges of possible dates from 751–504 calBCE (68.2% probability) and 767–488 calBCE (95.4% probability), respectively (Fig. 11, bottom).

5. Sanandaj as part of the Assyrian province of Parsua

The Assyrian province of Parsua, with the provincial capital at Nikkur (location unknown), was established in 744 BCE by Tiglath-pileser III (r. 744–727 BCE).[27] The position and extent of all the Assyrian provinces established in western Iran is still very unclear. For the province of Parsua, it remains to be clarified whether it was situated mainly within the modern Kurdistan province of Iran, extending from the region of Sanandaj in the east (corresponding very broadly to the northeastern headwater region of the Diyala / Sirwan) to the area of Lake Zeribor in the west, as Karen Radner recently argued,[28] or whether it also occupied regions in a more southern location in Kermanshah province, taking up "an area in the mountains of the central western Zagros north-west of the Mahidasht, and including the northern end of the Mahidasht itself," as Louis D. Levine suggested in a contribution that forms the foundation of all later discussions of the matter.[29] In any case, there would seem general agreement that at the time when their occupants were laid to rest in the three burials A6, A10 and A12, the Zagros Town cemetery of Sanandaj was situated in the Assyrian province of Parsua.

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[25] Kreppner and Radner 2018: 56-58 with fig. D5: d.

[26] Cf. also Squitieri 2020: 125. The grave is published in Radner, Kreppner and Squitieri 2020.

[27] Reade 1978: 138-139; Radner 2003: 57.

[28] Radner et al. 2020: 91.

[29] Levine 1974: 112. Note that he is open to the assumption that the province extended as far as Lake Zeribor, see Levine 1974: 105 fig. 2, 110: "Parsua is located once again in the area between Zeribor and the Mahidasht." Cf. Zadok 2001: 30 who seems to reconsider the possibility of locating Parsua the northern reaches of west of Lake Urmia (because of the possibility that the toponym may have survived in the name of Qal'eh Paswē near Solduz) – but Levine 1974: 106-112 has demonstrated conclusively that this is impossible, concluding: "In summary, it is suggested that there is no evidence for the location of Parsua in the north on the shores of Lake Urmia at any time." (Levine 1974: 112).

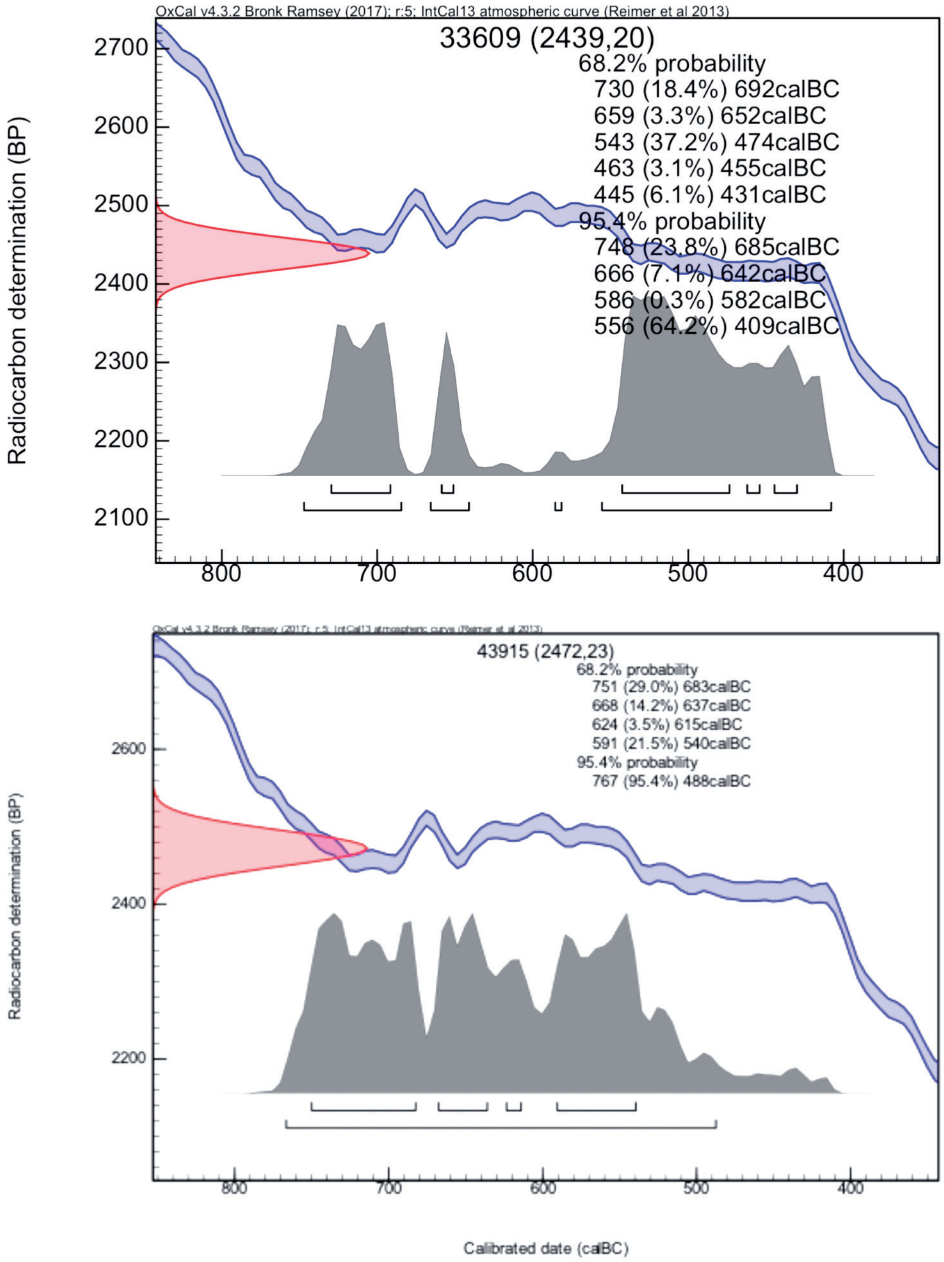

Fig. 11: Comparable calibrated radiocarbon datings from the Dinka Settlement Complex: (top) from a bone of a skeleton deposited in the well of Building I in Gird-i Bazar; (bottom) from a bone of the skeleton buried in Grave 110 on Qalat-i Dinka. Calibration software OxCal 4.3.2. Prepared by the Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, Mannheim.

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Towards an understanding of the Assyrian Empire's defence strategies in the east

A case study from the Peshdar Plain (Dinka Settlement Complex and Gawr Miran)

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the investigations conducted by the Peshdar Plain Project[1] at the sites of the Dinka Settlement Complex and Gawr Miran, both lying in the Peshdar Plain in the Sulaymaniyah region of Iraqi Kurdistan (Fig. 1). These two sites were chosen for a case study exploring the strategies of defence and territorial control implemented by the Assyrians after they had incorporated the Peshdar Plain into their Empire in the late 9th century BCE. By this time, the Peshdar Plain had become part of the north-eastern border province of the Palace Herald,[2] one of four dedicated defensive zones of the Empire.[3]

The area was directly connected, via a number of inner provinces, with the Assyrian heartland, down the Lower Zab where it merged with the Tigris just south of the city of Assur, which was the core of the Empire. In their official inscriptions but also in the letters exchanged with their state officials, the Assyrian kings discussed aspects pertinent to the control and protection of the Empire's borders, and in particular the building and maintenance of "chains" of fortresses emerges from these textual sources.[4] At a first glance, references to chains of fortresses in the texts might suggest a parallel to the Roman *limes*, with its line of fortifications that bounded the Roman Empire along the Rhine and the Danube, or along the

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[1] The Peshdar Plain Project (PPP) was inaugurated in 2015 and is directed by Prof. Dr Karen Radner (LMU Munich) and, since 2018, also Prof. Dr F. Janoscha Kreppner (WWU Münster), with the present author serving as deputy field director and, since 2018, field director. PPP is conducted under the auspices of the Directorate of Antiquities of Sulaymaniyah, headed by Kamal Rasheed Raheem, with the support of the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq, currently directed by Kaifi Mustafa Ali, and of the Raparin Directorate of Antiquities headed by Barzan Baiz Ismail, and with the authorisation of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage of Iraq, directed by Qais Hussein Rasheed. The results discussed in this chapter were obtained through work principally funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation through the establishment of the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Ancient History of the Near and Middle East for Karen Radner at LMU Munich in 2015. Additional funding for the excavations on Qalat-i Dinka was awarded to the present author by LMU excellent Nachwuchsförderungsfonds (2017) and by the Gerda Henkel Foundation (Project Grant AZ 09/V/18). Thanks are due to Karen Radner for suggesting the topic of this paper as a subject for research and to Denise Bolton (LMU Munich) for her careful editing of the language of this paper.

[2] Radner 2016b.

[3] Liverani 2004; Radner 2006: 48-49.

[4] E.g., Parker 1997.

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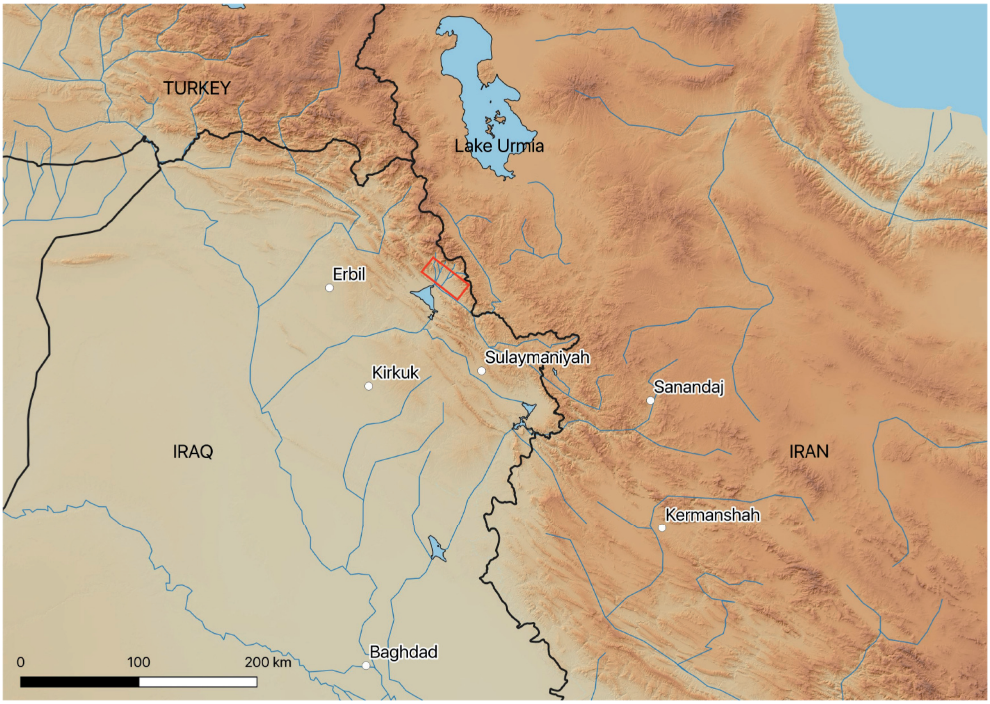

Fig. 1: Map of northern Iraq and western Iran with the location of the Peshdar Plain indicated by the red box.

Euphrates.[5] Recent archaeological fieldwork in the Peshdar Plain on the Lower Zab offers the opportunity to cast light on what the Assyrians had in mind when they discussed their defensive strategies on the ground.

In this paper, I will first introduce the geographic and geopolitical setting of the Peshdar Plain. I will then describe the results of the archaeological and geophysical investigations carried out at the Dinka Settlement Complex and Gawr Miran; finally, I will focus on the spatial dimensions of both sites in connection with other known Assyrian sites in the surrounding area through a visibility analysis. Based on these results, I will draw some conclusions about the imperial defence strategies as seen from the perspective of a network rather than a *limes*.

2. The geography of the Peshdar Plain and its geopolitical setting of the Iron Age

The Peshdar Plain has an arch-like shape that extends across approximately 1,400 km^2 in the Sulaymaniyah province of Iraqi Kurdistan (Fig. 2). It is bordered by the Zagros *chaîne magistrale* to the east, where the border with Iran runs, and by the mountain ranges of Khu-i Resh and Kurkur Dagh to the west. It is crossed by the Lower Zab river and its tributaries; the Zab breaks through the Khu-i Resh and Kurkur Dagh via the Darband-i Ranya pass to flow into the artificial Lake Dokan, which today occupies most of the Ranya Plain

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[5] See, e.g., Breeze et al. 2005.

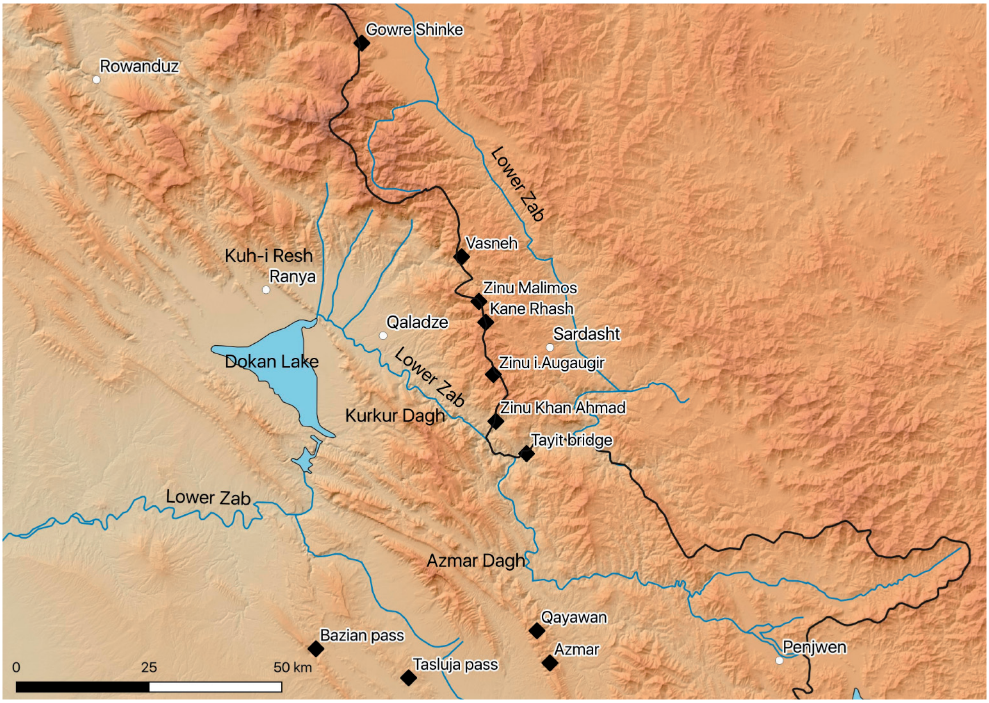
Gowre Shinke
Rowanduz
Lower Zab
Vasneh
Kuh-i Resh
Ranya
Zinu Malimos
Kane Rhash
Qaladze
Sardasht
Dokan Lake
Lower Zab
Zinu i.Augaugir
Zinu Khan Ahmad
Kurkur Dagh
Tayit bridge
Lower Zab
Azmar Dagh
Qayawan
Bazian pass
Azmar
Penjwen
Tasluja pass
0
25
50 km

Fig. 2: Map of the area surrounding the Peshdar Plain showing the main mountain passes and mountain ranges (adapted from Levine 1973: figs. 1-2). The black line is the Iraq-Iran border.

that extends to the west of the Peshdar Plain. The highest area of the Peshdar Plain measures about 700 m asl, increasing steeply towards the Zagros mountains.[6] At one of its lowest levels, the Bora Plain, a sub-unit of the Peshdar Plain, extends by about 7 km^2, and this is where the Dinka Settlement Complex lies. Several passes through the Zagros *chaîne magistrale* connect the Peshdar Plain to the Iranian side of the Zagros, where the Sardasht Plain lies (Fig. 2). Control over these passes has always had a strategic role in the geopolitics of the area, as is also demonstrated by the accounts of C.J. Edmonds, a British official who served in Sulaymaniyah between 1919 and 1925 at the time of the British Mandate of Iraq.[7]

The Lower Zab is a key communication path connecting both versants of the Zagros. This river originates in northwestern Iran, in the Piranshahr County; it flows southwards roughly in parallel to the Zagros chain until south of the Sardasht Plain where it makes an abrupt change of direction that leads it westwards until it ultimately crosses the border into Iran at the Tayit bridge. Here it continues its course towards northwest, bordering the Peshdar Plain to the south, and, as mentioned above, flowing into Lake Dokan via the Darband-i Ranya pass. The river exits the lake by the city of Dokan, resuming its course in a west-southwesterly direction for about 170 km before adjoining the Tigris river near the town of Al-Zab, about 30 km south of Qalat Shirqat, where the Assyrian capital city of Assur was located.

[6] Eckmeier et al. 2018.

[7] Edmonds 1957.

Much like it links (rather than separates) two modern states today, the Lower Zab once connected the territories of several bordering Iron Age polities to the core region of the Assyrian Empire. These polities are particularly known from Assyrian texts of the second half of the 9th century BCE onwards. On the eastern side of the Zagros, the Manneans controlled the area south of Lake Urmia up to the area of modern Sanandaj, in the Iranian Kurdistan province, where the Assyrian province of Parsua was located.[8] The site of Qalaichi was likely one of the Mannean centres.[9] North of Mannea, the powerful state of Urartu exerted its control over northwestern Iran and eastern Anatolia, frequently threatening Assyrian interests; whereas to the east and south-east of Mannea the many small polities of the Medes (whose later capital city Ecbatana was located near modern Hamedan) controlled a vast portion of the central Iranian plateau. As Urartu became a dominant political and military force after the second half of the 9th century BCE, the Assyrians shifted their attention to western Iran, developing commercial and military relationships with the Medes and the other Iranian kingdoms.[10] The Assyrians were particularly interested in the trade route known as the Great Khorasan Road which connected the Iranian Plateau to Mesopotamia. They were particularly interested in obtaining horses from these areas, as these animals were an essential component of their military force.[11] Another Iron Age kingdom that paid tribute to the Assyrian Empire was Ḫubuškia, which Lanfranchi and Radner locate in the plain of Sardasht, on the opposite side of the Zagros from the Peshdar Plain.[12] On the western side of the Zagros, north of the Peshdar Plain, the kingdom of Muṣaṣir was located in the plain where the modern city of Rowanduz now lies;[13] this kingdom also became a tributary state to the Assyrian Empire, creating a sort-of buffer zone between the latter and Urartu further north. South of Muṣaṣir, the territories of the Peshdar and Rania Plains, as mentioned above, became part of the Palace Herald province in the late 9th century BCE.[14] South of this province, the territories of Mazamua extended around the modern Shahrizor plain, which became an Assyrian province in the 9th century BCE. This province represented the preferred Assyrian access route into the Zagros through the passes of Bazian and Tasluja, the "passes of Babite" for the Assyrians.[15]

The Peshdar Plain and its surrounding regions included a mosaic of states, tributary states, and Assyrian provincial areas interconnected with each other both via the Lower Zab and several mountain passes, whose control was strategic to the Empire to manage the movement of people, armies and goods, especially tributes. The course of the Lower Zab, leading directly to the imperial core area, made the Peshdar Plain a strategic zone for defending the Empire against potential threats from the east. In addition to the river and the Zagros mountain passes, the land routes crossing the plain were equally important from a strategic point of view. Based on the letters from the state correspondence of Sargon II (721–705 BCE),[16] Karen Radner reconstructed the ancient route connecting the kingdom of Muṣaṣir to the Ranya Plain (Fig. 3); this route continued into the Peshdar Plain, with one

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[8] Radner 2013.
[9] Hassanzadeh and Mollasalehi 2011.
[10] Radner 2013.
[11] Radner 2003: 38-43.
[12] Lanfranchi 1995; Radner 2016b.
[13] Radner 2012; Danti 2014.
[14] Radner 2016b.
[15] Discussed by Levine 1973; Altaweel et al. 2012: 42.
[16] Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990; Lanfranchi 1995.

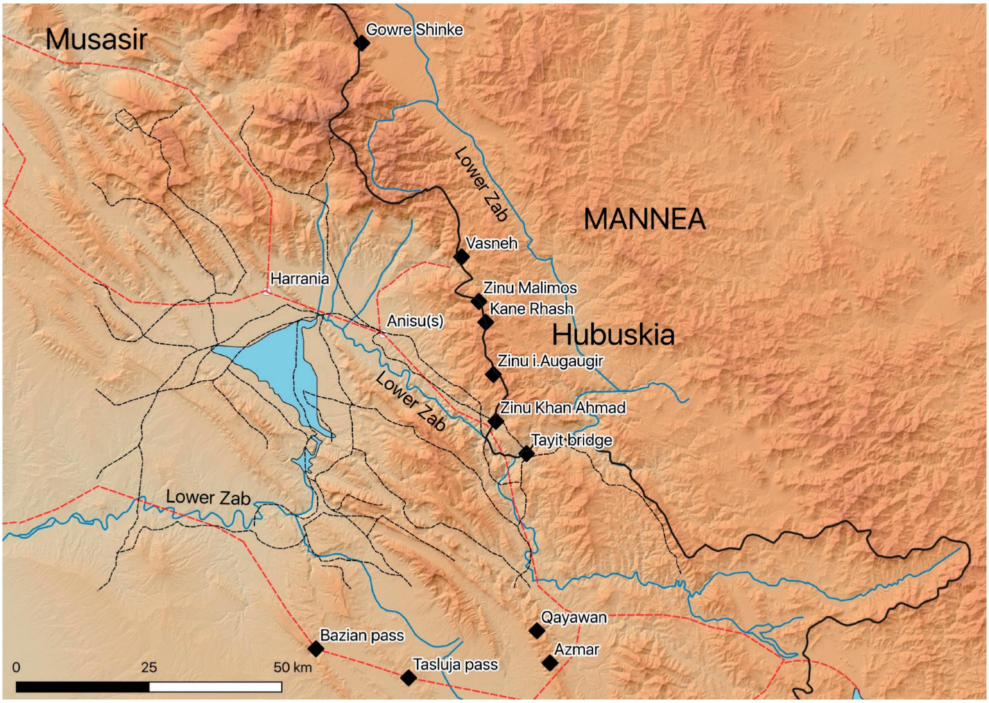
Musasir
Gowre Shinke
Lower Zab
MANNEA
Vasneh
Harrania
Zinu Malimos
Kane Rhash
Anisu(s)
Hubuskia
Zinu i.Augaugir
Lower Zab
Zinu Khan Ahmad
Tayit bridge
Lower Zab
Qayawan
Bazian pass
Azmar
Tasluja pass
0
25
50 km

Fig. 3: Map of the area surrounding the Peshdar Plain. Black dashed lines: the main caravan routes as reported in Edmonds 1957: map; red dashed lines: routes reported in Sargon II's letters mentioned in the text according to Radner 2016b: fig. B1.4; the main mountain passes according to Levine 1973: figs. 1-2. For the locations of Mannea, Muṣaṣir and Ḫubuškia, see Radner 2016b.

branch moving to the east towards Ḫubuškia, and another to the south, towards Mazamua, following a direction roughly parallel to the course of the Lower Zab.[17] This route crossed the ancient cities of Ḫarrania and Anisu, identified respectively with the modern towns of Ranya and Qaladze.[18] Today, Qaladze is the main population centre of the Peshdar Plain, and a large tell rises there which may enclose the remains of ancient Anisu.[19] To the south, this route connected to one described in detail in the so-called "Mazamua Itinerary."[20] This second route crossed the lower regions of the Lower Zab towards the Shahrizor Plain passing through the Bazian and Tasluja passes, thus traversing the Assyrian provinces of Arzuḫina and Mazamua.[21] In addition to the routes recorded in the texts from the time of Sargon II, additional paths existed that linked the Peshdar Plain with the surrounding regions, as evidenced by the caravan routes reported by C.J. Edmonds. Some caravan routes followed the course of the Lower Zab to the north (like the routes emerging from Sargon II's correspondence), others took a southerly direction, crossing the Kurkur Dagh and the Azmar Dagh to the south of the Lower Zab (roughly as the modern motorways do). To the north, some connected the Peshdar Plain to the Ranya Plain through the Darband-i Ranya, as the river does, moving in a southwestern direction; others moved north from the Peshdar Plain through the Kuh-i Resh (similar to the northern route reconstructed from Sargon II's letters; Fig. 3).

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[17] Radner 2016b: 17-21 with fig. B1.4.
[18] Lanfranchi 1995.
[19] Radner 2016a: 11, 13 fig. A1.3.
[20] Levine 1989.
[21] Radner 2016b: 20 fig. B1.4.

In conclusion, despite the rugged mountain landscape that characterised this area, several communication paths linked the imperial provinces to their neighbouring states to both the west and east of the Zagros. Such routes must have been established long before the Assyrian conquests, as shown by the Iron Age, pre-Assyrian, pottery tradition of the Peshdar Plain which has several links to the sites located east of the Zagros (e.g., Hasanlu and Dinkha Tepe).[22] Once the Assyrian province of the Palace Herald had been established, control over these paths became essential both to defend the region from potential enemies, and ensure the regular supply of tribute. The question arises, then, as to how the imperial strategies to control and defend this area of the Zagros materialised, from an archaeological point of view.

3. The Dinka Settlement Complex, its lower town and the *qanat* system

The Dinka Settlement Complex (DSC) lies in the Bora Plain, a subunit of the Peshdar Plain, which extends to approximately 7 km^2. The Bora Plain is bordered to the west by a crescent-shaped range of hills and to the south by the course of the Lower Zab river (Fig. 4). The settlement extends over about 60 ha, judging by the pottery spread observed during the pottery survey,[23] and it is composed of a lower town and a citadel. The latter is situated on Qalat-i Dinka, a partially natural and partially artificial mound situated at the southern end of the crescent-shape hill range.

In the lower town, the Peshdar Plain Project has conducted investigations since 2015, with a combination of geophysics, coring, and excavation. These have revealed a densely built area, which encompasses a low mound called Gird-i Bazar.[24] In 2013 a chicken farm was built on this mound, destroying half of the site (Fig. 4). The magnetic survey highlighted the possible limits of the built area to the north, east and south, as well as the presence of an ancient wadi that once crossed the settlement roughly through the middle. Its existence has been confirmed by both a hydrologic analysis and the excavation of three geoarchaeological trenches which brought to light the ancient wadi bed.[25] At Gird-i Bazar, the archaeological excavations, undertaken between 2015 and 2018, unearthed a series of buildings some of which hosted a pottery workshop, with pottery kilns and tools involved in pottery making.[26] Two more operations, called DLT2 and DLT3, were opened in the lower town, west of Gird-i Bazar. In the former, sections of rooms belonging to three large free-standing buildings whose layout was visible in the magnetic survey were excavated.[27] Based on the presence of large storage vessels placed on the floor, at least one of the excavated rooms may have had a storage function. Operation DLT3 brought to light portions of three buildings, from whose fills a fragment of a baked brick was found, whose fragmentary cuneiform inscription can

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[22] Herr 2016; 2018.

[23] Giraud 2016.

[24] Fassbinder et al. 2017.

[25] Altaweel and Eckmeier 2019.

[26] Kreppner et al. 2018a.

[27] Kreppner et al. 2018b.

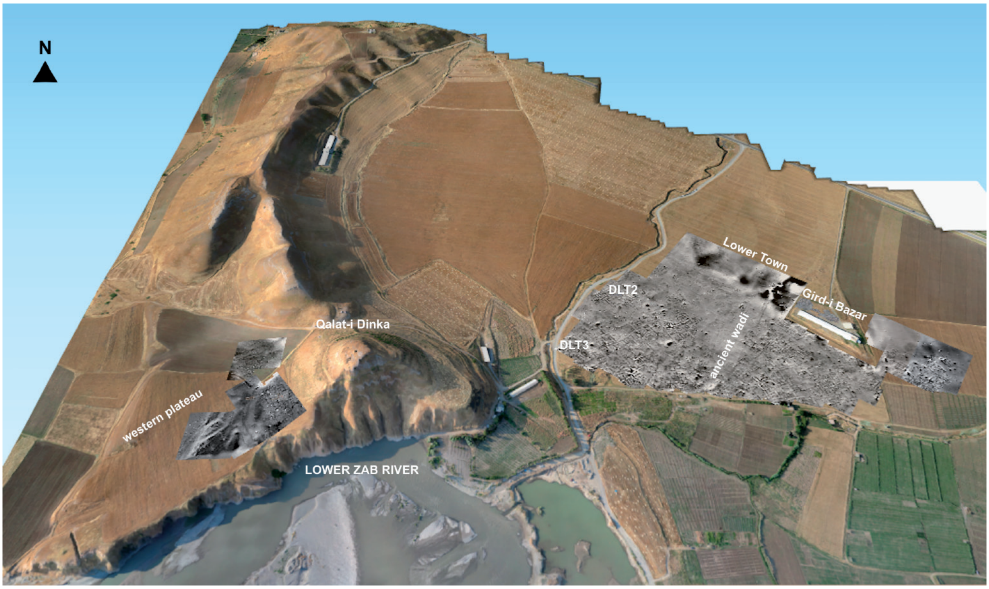

Fig. 4: 3D view of the Dinka Settlement Complex generated in QGIS using DEM and orthophoto created by ICONEM in spring 2016 (courtesy of J. Giraud). The magnetograms are generated by J. Fassbinder and his team. For details, see Fassbinder and Ašandulesei 2016; Fassbinder et al. 2017; Fassbinder et al. 2018; Scheiblecker and Fassbinder 2019.

be attributed to Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE).[28] The radiocarbon dates available for the lower town situate it firmly in the Iron Age, between c. 1200 and 800 BCE. This indicates that the settlement was founded sometime before the Assyrian conquests of the late 9th century BCE.[29] The pottery retrieved from Gird-i Bazar and the other operations shows uniform and consistent characteristics, in both shapes and techniques, that can be linked to the Iron Age tradition of the wider Zagros area.[30] No substantial change was observed in the pottery of DSC, which might indicate that this tradition lasted for at least the entire span of time covered by the radiocarbon dates (roughly corresponding to Iron Age I and II in archaeological phases), and very possibly continued under the period of imperial control.

The changes that the DSC underwent after the Assyrian conquests of the late 9th century BCE, whether it enlarged, was partially abandoned, or changed function, are still open questions which future research intends to tackle. In this regard, it is worthwhile mentioning that the discovery of human bodies in a Gird-i Bazar well, radiocarbon dated to 748–409 calBCE.[31] These findings might point to a drastic change that occurred in the settlement from the late 9th onwards, that is when the DSC was under Assyrian control. In particular, the fact that no diagnostic pottery from the Persian period (i.e., c. 5th–4th centuries BCE) has been observed at Gird-i Bazar would suggest an early date for the human bodies retrieved from

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[28] Radner 2019b.

[29] Radner 2019a: 17 fig. A4.

[30] Herr 2016; Herr et al. 2018.

[31] Downey 2018; Rohde and Downey 2019.

Gird-i Bazar well.[32] If one assumes that these bodies were placed in the well[33] when the structures of Gird-i Bazar were no longer in use, then it would be possible to date the abandonment of Gird-i Bazar to after the Assyrian conquests, perhaps as a consequence of the overall rearrangement of the site that occurred under the new rulers, though not immediately after their conquest.[34] On the other hand, the cuneiform inscribed brick from operation DLT3[35] and the change in architectural phases observed in the same operation would suggest that this part of the settlement continued to be occupied well into the Assyrian period. This is also confirmed by a charcoal sample collected in 2015 from the fill of a geoarchaeological trench that had been opened in the location of operation DLT3, radiocarbon dated to 830–789 calBCE.[36] This date fits with the period of Assyrian control over the site. Nevertheless, an overall picture of the transformations that occurred in the lower town while under the Assyrian control is still incomplete and requires further investigation.

Another possible change brought about by the Assyrian control of the area around the DSC may be the construction of the *qanat* system (or part of it), which is still visible in the eastern portion of the Bora Plain, about 1.5 km southeast of Gird-i Bazar (Fig. 5). *Qanats* are underground channels used for agricultural irrigation. They take water from underground water tables and communicate with the surface via vertical shafts.[37] Technically, a true *qanat* is one that draws water from a water table, and it would be more appropriate to speak of underground channels in cases that make use of different sources of water (e.g. rivers).[38] In our case, the water source for the Bora Plain *qanat* system is still not clear.

At least ten shaft openings are visible in satellite images of the Bora Plain (Fig. 5), whose presence was confirmed by ground-truthing. Some of them are still used today to feed carp ponds.[39] This area (dubbed "*qanat* area") was investigated by Peshdar Plain Project in 2016, 2017, and 2019 by means of ERT surveys, coring, and drone mapping.[40] The results highlighted a possible underground channel that runs almost parallel to the river in a northwest-southeast direction and that intersects with another east-to-west-running channel. Finding the physical connection between these channels and the DSC was one of the targets of the 2019 spring campaign, whose results are currently undergoing analysis. Although there is no material evidence that helps us to date the Bora Plain *qanat* system, there are some hints that we can connect it to the Assyrians. First, the Assyrian Empire sponsored large-scale irrigation systems aimed at boosting agricultural output in specific areas,[41] and the Assyrians therefore surely had the technology and the experience to reproduce such a system in the Bora Plain. Second, the Iron Age remains at the DSC are the only substantial settlement remains across the entire Bora Plain; the only other substantial remains belong to the Sasanian period cemetery excavated at Gird-i Bazar, but they do not seem to be connected to any large contempo-

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[32] This conclusion depends, of course, on our current knowledge of Persian period diagnostic pottery of the area, which may be updated by future studies.

[33] Anthropological analysis on the bodies from the well to determine whether they were buried or thrown into the well, along with the most probable causes of death, is ongoing.

[34] Radner et al. 2018.

[35] Radner 2019b.

[36] Altaweel and Marsh 2016.

[37] English 1998.

[38] Bonacossi 2018: 100.

[39] Altaweel and Marsh 2016.

[40] Altaweel 2017.

[41] Bonacossi 2018; Ur 2005.

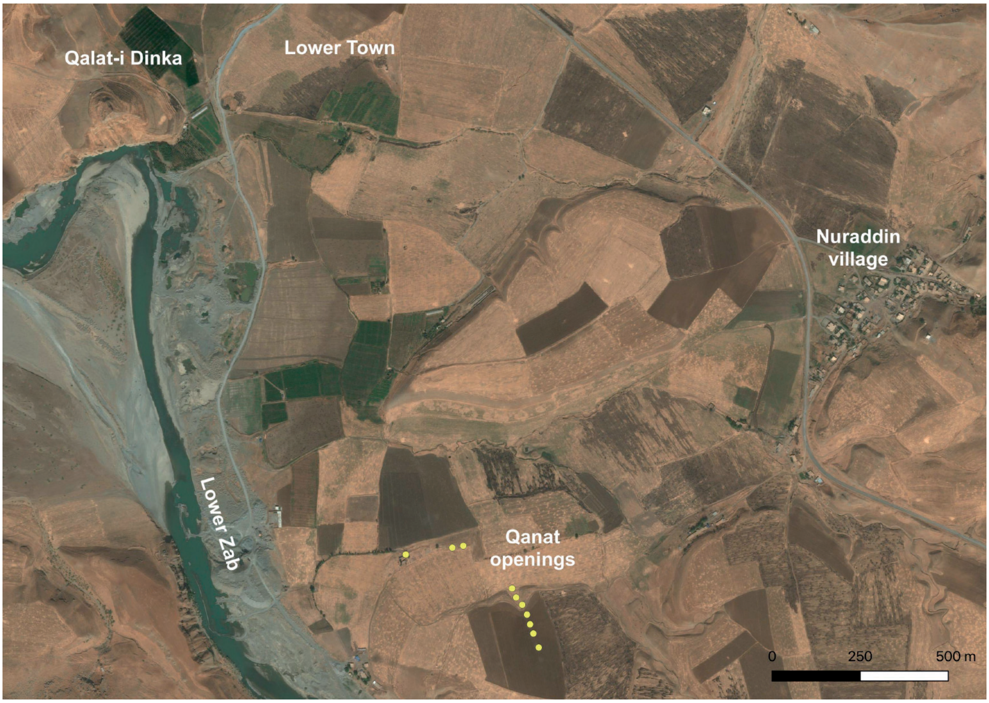

Fig. 5: Bing satellite image (accessed in May 2020) showing the locations of the *qanat* shafts.

raneous settlement in its proximity.[42] Hence, it is very likely that the *qanat* system was built during the Iron Age to serve the DSC. Its construction may be linked to the rearrangement of the site undertaken by the Assyrians. Although the Bora Plain lies well within the rain-fed agriculture range, with precipitation averaging 772 mm/year (as measured at Lake Dokan[43]), it is conceivable that the Assyrians sponsored the implementation of an artificial and more efficient irrigation system in order to boost and / or make more reliable the area's agricultural productivity. An incremental increase in agricultural productivity may have provided the Assyrians with additional benefits in taxes, especially from specific crops such as cereals. Further work on the archaeobotanical remains from the DSC will cast light on the agricultural output of the Bora Plain in relation to the Assyrian presence.

4. Qalat-i Dinka, the citadel of the Dinka Settlement Complex

As mentioned above, the citadel of the DSC lies on the Qalat-i Dinka mound. On the western side, the mound has a rather steep slope that gently merges into a wide plateau about 6 ha in size. The plateau is a few metres higher than the fields to the north and to the west, while to the south it is eroded by the river. A fragmentary Neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablet documenting the sale of a slave woman, dating to 705 BCE and indicating that the DSC lay within the Palace Herald province, was found during agricultural work on the western slope,[44] with the results of the pottery survey confirming the Iron Age occupation of this side of the mound.[45]

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[42] Squitieri 2020.

[43] See Ali 2007; Altaweel and Marsh 2016.

Since 2015, this area has been explored by means of geophysical surveys and excavation. The magnetic survey carried out in 2015 revealed a concentration of structures up the slope (Fig. 6B), to the west of which an apparent gap with no features was identified.[46] Further down the slope, a curved line was also revealed; it is about 120 m long and it seems to enclose the entire area. This line has been interpreted as a possible fortification line, delimiting the built-up area up the slope.[47] On this line two operations were opened in 2018, called QID2 and QID3 respectively, whose results will be shown below. Close to the north-western end of this line, next to the modern fence, two large door sockets were found lying on the surface, which might have belonged to a large gate located in the proximity.[48] This evidence has led to the hypothesis that Qalat-i Dinka was once home to a fortified citadel or fortress that served to guard the Lower Zab and the passages across the Zagros mountains. Before moving to the

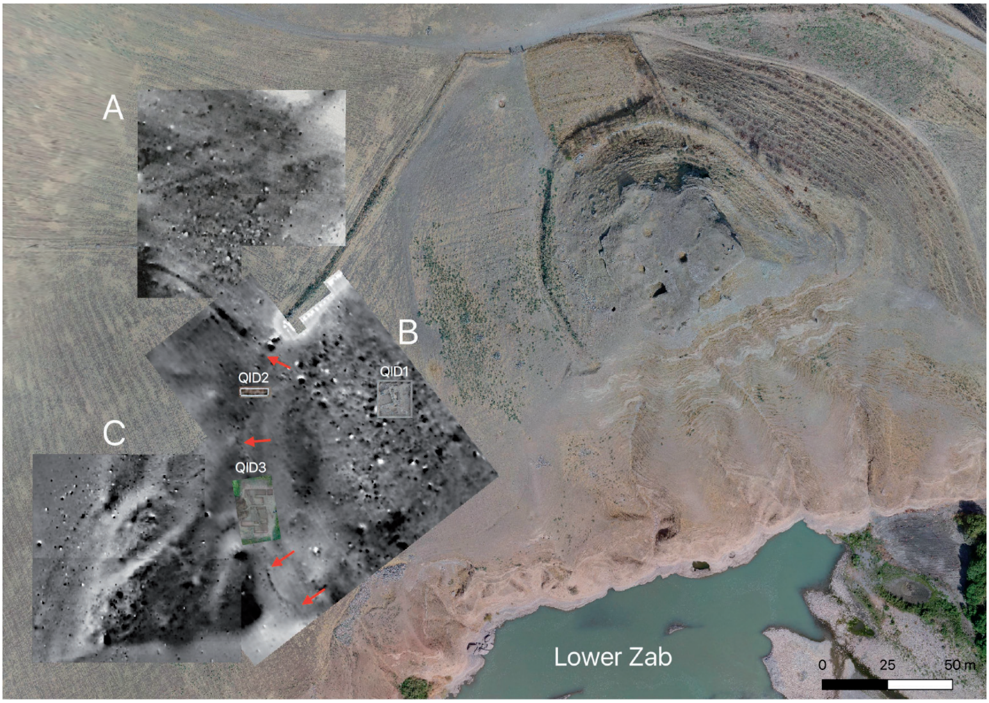

Fig. 6: Orthophoto of the western side of Qalat-i Dinka showing the magnetograms (first published in Fassbinder and Ašandulesei 2016; Scheiblecker and Fassbinder 2019), and the three operations QID1, QID2 and QID3. The red arrows indicate the curved line interpreted as a fortification line.

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[44] Radner 2015; 2016: 17-18.

[45] Giraud 2016.

[46] Fassbinder and Ašandulesei 2016.

[47] Fassbinder and Ašandulesei 2016: 38.

[48] Fassbinder and Ašandulesei 2016: 42 figs. B4.7a-b.

archaeological evidence from Qalat-i Dinka, it is worth mentioning the results of the magnetic prospection carried out in 2018 to the north and west of the area surveyed in 2015.[49] To the north, some magnetic anomalies seem to point to the existence of more archaeological structures, whose layout, however, is not clear (Fig. 6A); to the west, the results were difficult to interpret, and no regular feature was observed. It is possible that this area, located to the west of the curved line seen in the 2015 magnetogram, contains no archaeological structures, which would further confirm that the curved line marks the end of the settlement on this side (Fig. 6C).

4.1 The protective architecture on the western plateau of Qalat-i Dinka

Two operations, called respectively QID2 and QID3, were opened across the curved line observed in the 2015 magnetogram (Fig. 6B). QID2 is a 10 × 2 m trench located in the northern part of the plateau. Its excavation revealed thick layers of alluvium made of soil and pebbles almost completely devoid of pottery. Roughly 1 m below the surface, a large and sloping stone structure was encountered.[50] It was 7 m long and 2 m wide, though it may have been larger as the structure extended past the northern, western, and southern excavation limits. It is made of medium and small-sized stones mixed with pottery sherds. Its main characteristic is that it has a slope of about 30 %, with a 2 m difference between the highest point on the east and the lowest point on the west. Here, the lowest level of the structure was not reached by our excavations. To the east, a trodden surface extends to the edge of the trench. Pottery sherds were lying flat on this surface. A depression was noted between the stone structure and the trodden surface. To the south of the trodden surface, a sounding was opened which uncovered additional pottery sherds, including an almost complete vessel.[51] The virgin soil was not reached in any part of the trench, so the full measure of both the stone structure and the floor are not known.

Because of its slope, we interpret this stone structure as a glacis (Fig. 7A). This term has been variously applied in the archaeological literature, generating some confusion about its use.[52] Broadly, a glacis can be defined as a constructed sloping surface built against a wall or another structure such as an earthbank, with the purpose of reducing erosion and fortifying the structure by creating a further obstacle for enemies.[53] Such glacis are attested archaeologically especially in the Levant and Egypt,[54] where they are built against fortification walls. However, a glacis can also be placed on the outer edge of a ditch, where the removed earth is accumulated to form a sloped earthbank.[55] In the case of operation QID2, it is difficult to reconstruct the original arrangement of the glacis, considering that only a portion of it has been unearthed; however, the presence of the depression on the top may indicate that a construction, such as wooden palisade, once stood here.[56] Moreover, the gap seen on the magnetogram to the east of the enclosing line may indicate the presence of a ditch in this area,

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[49] Scheiblecker and Fassbinder 2019.

[50] Hashemi 2019.

[51] Hashemi 2019: 63 fig. D36.

[52] See, e.g., Wright 1968; 1969; 1997.

[53] Burke 2004: 113-114.

[54] Burke 2004; Zakbar and Zakbar 1982.

[55] Wright 1968: 1.

[56] Hashemi 2019: 61.

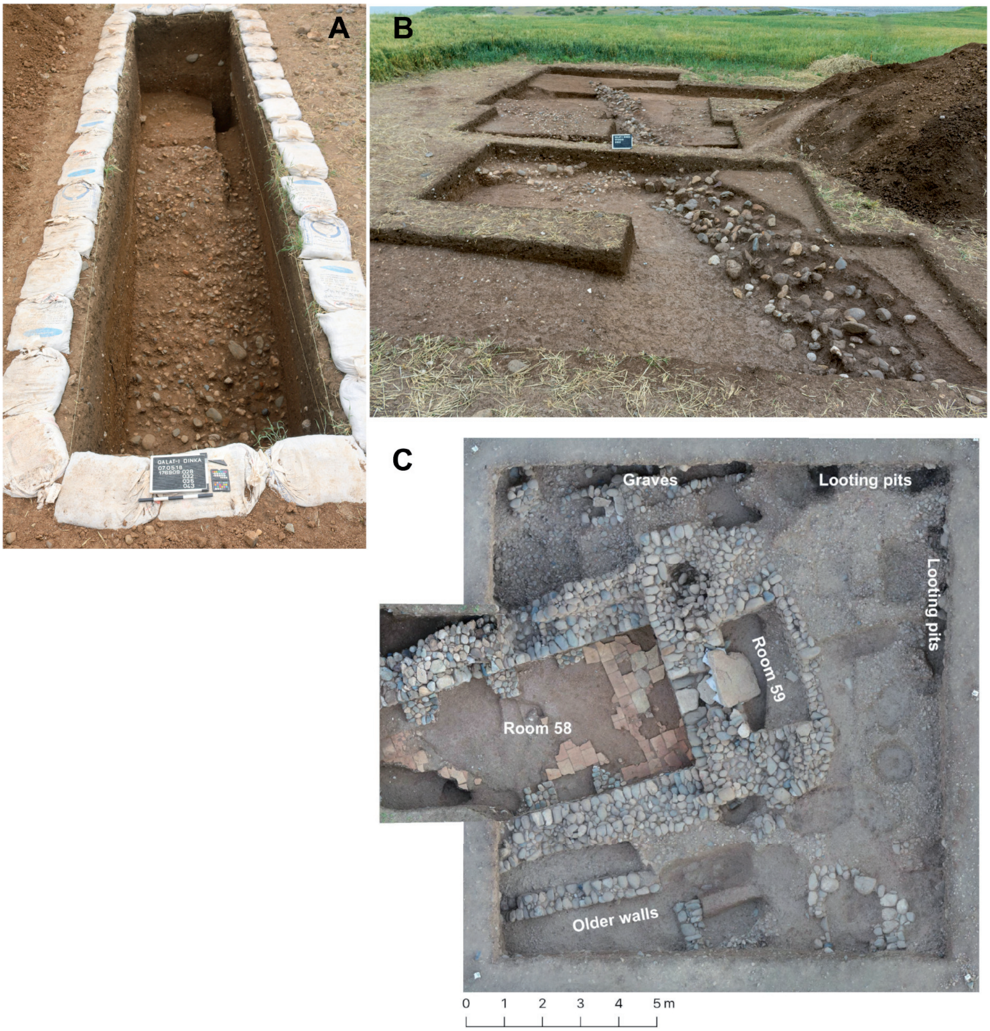

Fig. 7: A: The sloping stone structure in operation QID2 interpreted as a glacis (photo by Z. Hashemi). B: The stone structure in QID3 (photo by F. Wolter). C: Orthophoto of operation QID1 with the structures of Building P (Rooms 58 and 59).

bordered by the glacis. So, it is possible that the glacis of QID2 was built to protect a wall or a palisade, with a ditch beyond it to improve defence.

As for the date of the glacis, no radiocarbon dating was possible; however, the pottery retrieved from the trench is morphologically and technically consistent with the Iron Age pottery from the lower town, thus suggesting contemporaneity.[57] Whether this glacis was built before or during the period of Assyrian control over the site is still an open question. It is also possible that the Assyrians reused an already existing defensive system, because, as we will see below, Qalat-i Dinka represents a strategic observation point in the plain. Hence it may well have been used by the Assyrians to improve their control over the area.

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[57] Herr et al. 2019: 109.

The operation called QID3 is located about 35 m south of QID2 (Fig. 7B).[58] Here, another stone feature was found, although it is quite different from the one unearthed in QID2. This is a linear feature made of loosely-assembled stones of medium size, oriented in a roughly NW-SE direction. Its width varies between c. 70 cm and 1.5 m. While to the south-east it seems to end within the excavation area, to the north-west it continues beyond the excavation limits. No structures were found on either side of this feature, but what seems to be a trodden surface was uncovered. On this surface, a charcoal sample was collected and radiocarbon dated to 1043–850 calBCE.[59] This date fits very well the range of dates obtained from the other operation on Qalat-i Dinka (QID1, discussed below) and the lower town. The purpose of this feature in QID3 is difficult to ascertain, though it is plausible that it may have been a substructure to support a mudbrick or wooden construction, perhaps a palisade with a defensive and demarcating function.

In conclusion, operations QID2 and QID3 have revealed structures that can be related to the need for demarcating and protecting the edge of the settlement. The physical connection between these two operations is missing, but it is possible that the curved anomaly visible in the magnetogram represents the continuation of the structure unearthed in QID3 (which was not so deep under the surface), to which a glacis-like structure was associated, partially unearthed in QID2.

4.2 "Building P"

Moving eastwards, up the slope, additional archaeological features were highlighted in the 2015 magnetogram, although their layouts did not show up very clearly. This area was investigated in 2016, 2018, and 2019 with the excavation of operation QID1 (Figs. 6, 7C).[60] Overall, an area of about 190 m^2 was excavated. The study of the features unearthed in QID1 is challenging, because the entire area was severely damaged by the excavation of several looting pits which irremediably altered the stratigraphy. The looting pits damaged every archaeological feature in QID1. Thanks to a date printed on a biscuit package found in 2016 in one of the looting pits, it is possible to date at least some of the looting activity to after 1999.[61] Because the topsoil did not show any traces of looting, it is very possible that this activity had ceased in more recent years. Overall, operation QID1 yielded two categories of archaeological features: one massive architectural structure belonging to a building called Building P, and several graves (of different types: cist graves, simple pits, and cremation burials). The graves had been robbed by looters, and some were even completely obliterated judging by the quantity of very fragmented human bones found in the fills.

In this section, I will focus on the architecture of Building P. Compared to the buildings unearthed in the lower town, the monumentality of Building P is striking. It consists of a large room (called Room 58) and a smaller room (Room 59) to its east. Room 58 measures 8 × 4 m, though its westernmost limit has not been completely unearthed. It is bordered to the north and south by two stone walls reaching a width of 1.5 m. To the east, it is bordered by another massive wall with a 1.2 m wide threshold, made of two large and flat stones. The threshold is 90 cm higher than Room 58's floor. This floor is paved with flat-backed bricks alternated with flat stone slabs. Originally, this floor must have covered an area of about 27 m^2.[62] Room 58 is also equipped with five pilasters whose stone bases are still preserved: three against the northern wall and two against the southern wall. Another feature of Room 58 is an 80 cm wide by 3 m long step in the structure of its northern and southern walls. Past the steps, towards the west, both walls have a solid structure. These steps may be what remains of niches opened in both walls, or high benches.

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[58] Wolter 2019.

[59] Radner and Squitieri 2019.

[60] Herr 2019.

[61] Kreppner and Squitieri 2017: 48.

It is not clear if Room 58 was originally roofed. The presence of the paved floor might suggest it was unroofed as similar bricks were used in Courtyard 18 of Building I in the lower town to pave part of an open courtyard;[63] however, roofing is also a possible option considering that Room 58 is 4 m wide, a distance that could have been covered without the need for central support columns by using beams. This issue is connected to the function of the pilasters, which is also not clear. They may have been buttresses constructed to reinforce the walls, a solution that can be observed at various sites, such as Baba Jan.[64] The wide stone walls of Room 58, however, may have not have required buttresses as reinforcements. Moreover, no evidence for a pilaster superstructure has been found during the excavation of Room 58. It is possible that the pilasters were originally connected to shelving,[65] of which no trace has been preserved, which may have alternated with the niches mentioned above.

To the east of Room 58, a monumental threshold connects to Room 59. In contrast to the larger Room 58, Room 59 measures about 5 m^2 and its floor, made of small pebbles, is higher than the floor in Room 58 as a consequence of the natural slope on which Building P was constructed. To the northwest and southwest, Room 59 is bordered by the corners of Building P. The south-western corner has a curved layout, while the north-western corner has a large almost squarish shape measuring about 2.5 × 3.5 m, which unfortunately was damaged by looters in the middle. This gives Building P a somewhat asymmetrical layout. Inside Room 59, the only find was a large stone slab measuring 1.5 × 1.3 × 0.14 m. It was found in an upright position[66] and evidently it had been lifted and then left in this position by looters. The stone slab has a carved circular depression of about 20 cm in diameter on one of its corners. The stone's original position and function are not clear, though it is possible it was originally used as a paving stone in the floor of Room 59. To the east, Room 59 is bordered by a small wall built against a thick package of pebbles and pottery sherds which forms the walking surface for the outdoor area that extends to the north, east, and south of Building P.

The size and width of the walls, the paved floor, the pilasters, the monumental threshold, and the niches or high benches make Building P unparalleled in the lower town. Nevertheless, some links with the latter do exist. The wall construction technique, using cobbles enclosing a core of smaller stones with no mortar, is the same in both the lower town and the citadel; additionally, the flat bricks used to pave the floor Room 58 can be found in the lower town, although they are used to a lesser extent. These connections suggest that Building P was contemporaneous with the structures of the lower town. This is also confirmed by the radiocarbon date obtained from a charcoal sample from Room 58's floor, dated to 1001–847 calBCE, which is consistent with both the date obtained from operation QID3 and those obtained from the lower town.[67] Based on this date, it can be suggested that Building P was erected before the arrival of the Assyrians, and perhaps continued to be used for some time after their conquest.

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[62] Herr 2019: 52.

[63] Bartl 2018: 92.

[64] Baba Jan, level III, rooms 3 and 5, see Goff 1977: fig. 1.

[65] Herr 2019: 52.

[66] Herr 2019: 53-55.

In this respect, it is worth mentioning the graves excavated during the 2019 campaign, around Building P. These graves were probably installed after Building P went out of use, though this is not clear due to the looting activity that has altered their stratigraphic relationships. One of the graves was radiocarbon dated to 748–409 calBCE (Grave 110),[68] so if we assume that at least this grave was installed after Building P's main-use period, then Building P may have been in use until the early 8th century BCE. It is hoped that future research will cast light on this issue and clarify the relationship between the building and the graves that surround it.

The architecture of Building P suggests a monumental structure, isolated within its immediate vicinity, although the magnetogram shows other possible large structures that may be located to the south and southwest of Building P at a distance of about 10–15 m. Based on the distinctive features that set it apart from the other buildings of DSC, Building P surely did not have a domestic function. The objects retrieved from its fills partially help in trying to define its function, although in most cases, they cannot be clearly associated with the building itself because of the modern looting activities.[69] Nevertheless, the ivory or bone fragments found in abundance in Room 58's fills and on its floor very possibly belong to the original furniture of this room,[70] as no such item was found in the excavated graves.[71] These items show decorative patterns such as rosettes, guilloches, and palmettes which situate them in the Iron Age tradition; they were likely used to decorate pieces of wooden furniture or other items. These objects have no parallels in the lower town, providing another marked difference between Building P and the other DSC buildings. The presence of these items may point to the existence of an elite residence either in Building P itself or in a building in its vicinity.

In conclusion, Building P represents an exceptional structure within DSC. Its architecture and the ivory (or bone) items retrieved from it suggest that it was an elite residence, or that it was part of an arrangement where the local elites resided. Its specific function cannot be clearly defined; however, its massive walls and large southwestern corner confer on the structure a fort-like aspect. Although it is on a much larger scale, a comparison with the Iron Age II citadel of Hasanlu can be drawn. Hasanlu is composed of a series of buildings that share a similar layout, though apparently having different functions (e.g., temples, elite residences, storage areas), protected by a fortification wall, which has been unearthed in small exposures.[72] Building P along with the other structures on the slope of Qalat-i Dinka that were highlighted on the magnetogram may be a smaller-scale reproduction of Hasanlu citadel, with a possible fortification line located down the slope from operations QID2 and QID3. Whether Building P itself was originally a fort is still not clear, although it is possible. However, the section below will investigate the possibility that Qalat-i Dinka served as an ideal observation point within the plain, and may also have been used for defensive purposes. In this respect, it is also possible that a watch tower may have existed on the very top of the mound, as suggested by the many baked bricks found on all slopes of the mound.

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[67] Radner and Squitieri 2019.

[68] For the date see Radner, Amelirad and Azizi 2020: 106-107.

[69] Squitieri 2019.

[70] Squitieri 2019: 126-128.

[71] For the results of the 2019 campaign see Radner, Kreppner and Squitieri 2020.

[72] Danti 2013: 63, fig. 1.6.

5. Gawr Miran: an ideal vantage point over the Peshdar Plain

In the sections above, I have summarised the results of the investigations carried out at Qalat-i Dinka that provide the most credibility to the possibility that it was a fortified citadel. Before looking at the possible defensive function of Qalat-i Dinka based on its position in the landscape, I will also introduce, in conjunction with that of Qalat-i Dinka, the potential defensive function of the site of Gawr Miran. Gawr Miran extends to about 5 ha and is located on the hills bordering the Bora Plain, about 3.5 km east of Qalat-i Dinka, and sits about 120 m higher (Fig. 8). It offers a view over a vast area encompassing the entire Bora Plain and beyond, which makes it an ideal strategic observation point. The pottery survey found Iron Age pottery on this site, of the same type as that found in the DSC.[73] In 2016, the magnetic survey revealed the presence of a large mudbrick or limestone construction.[74] The presence of Iron Age pottery makes this site contemporary to the DSC. Its strategic position coupled with the presence of a large building leads us to think that it may have hosted a watch tower or a similar structure, to aid observation. Rectangular stone structures interpreted as watchtowers with military purposes, often located on high mounds, have been identified in the area of Lake Urmia and on the citadel area, and their use is also mentioned in Neo-Assyrian texts.[75]

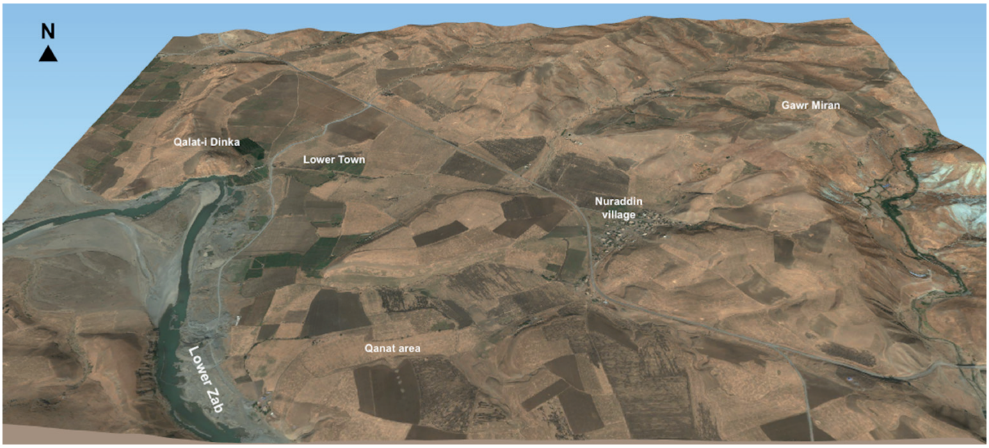

Fig. 8: 3D view of the Bora Plain showing the Dinka Settlement Complex and Gawr Miran in the background, and the *qanat* area in the foreground. Generated in QIGS using a SRTM 1 Arc-Second Global DEM (30 m resolution, downloaded from USGS), overlying BING satellite image (accessed in May 2020).

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[73] Giraud 2016.
[74] Fassbinder et al. 2017: 28.
[75] Coşkun et al. 2020; Muscarella 1986.

Gawr Miran may have hosted a similar structure, and along with Qalat-i Dinka it may have functioned together as an ensemble to guarantee a wide view over the area, as I will next demonstrate.

6. The Qalat-i Dinka–Gawr Miran observation system

In this section, I will present the results of the visibility analysis using Qalat-i Dinka and Gawr Miran as observation points. The analysis was conducted in QGIS using a SRTM 1 Arc-Second Global DEM (spatial resolution: 30 m). Both the observer and target heights were set at 15 m, with a radius of visibility set at 30 km. The output is shown in Figs. 9–10. Both figures also show the passages through the Zagros mountains discussed previously, and the sites of Girdi Gulak, Usu Aska, and Qalat Said Ahmadan, where relevant Iron Age structures have been unearthed. The remains of Girdi Gulak and Usu Aska have been connected to fortresses dating to the Neo-Assyrian period, the first located in the Ranya Plain,[76] the second in the Darband-i Ranya pass,[77] a strategic location for controlling access to the Peshdar Plain. Qalat Said Ahmadan is a large tell that rises out of the Peshdar Plain, about 10 km north of

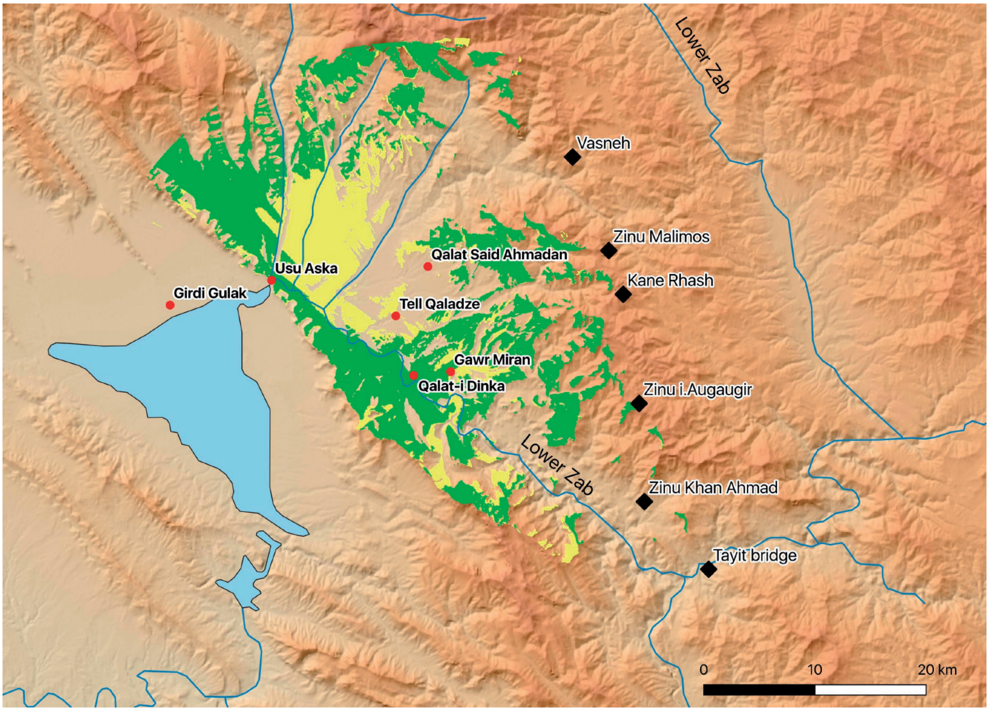
Lower Zab
Vasneh
Zinu Malimos
Qalat Said Ahmadan
Usu Aska
Kane Rhash
Girdi Gulak
Tell Qaladze
Gawr Miran
Qalat-i Dinka
Zinu i.Augaugir
Lower Zab
Zinu Khan Ahmad
Tayit bridge
0
10
20 km

Fig. 9: Viewshed analysis generated in QGIS. View range: 30 km, target heights: 15 m. Green: viewshed from the top of Qalat-i Dinka. Yellow: viewshed from Gawr Miran. The location of the mountain passes is taken from Levine 1973.

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[76] Colantoni et al. 2018.

[77] MacGinnis 2019; MacGinnis et al. 2020.

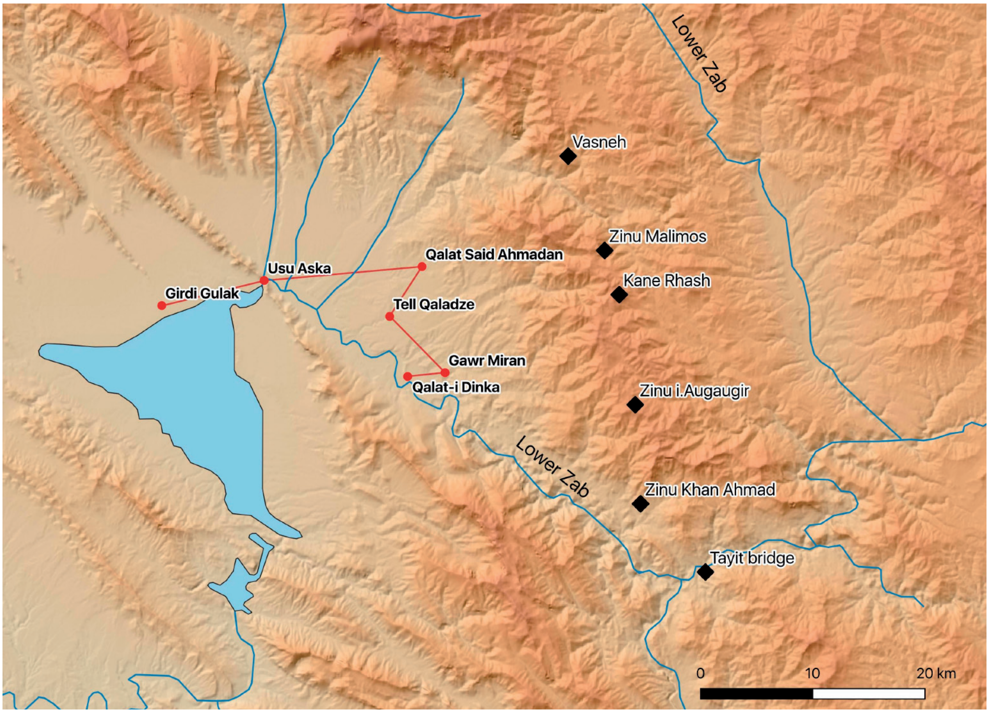

Fig. 10: Visibility network analysis generated in QGIS. View range: 30 km, target heights: 15 m. The location of the mountain passes is taken from Levine 1973.

Qalat-i Dinka.[78] On its top, Iron Age structures were found that, given their vantage point over the plain, were thought to have a military function. The tell of Qaladze was also included in the analysis, as this site has been identified with the ancient Anisu, the main population centre in the area during the Neo-Assyrian period (see above).

Fig. 9 shows the viewshed analysis results. The green shed represents the view from Qalat-i Dinka, while the yellow that from Gawr Miran. It is immediately noticeable that both viewsheds cover almost half of the Peshdar Plain, plus a good portion of the Lower Zab river course, up to the passage of Darband-i Ranya where the fort of Usu Aska lies. The area south of the river is also visible, covering the eastern versant of the Kurkur Dagh mountain range. Tell Qaladze is also within the visibility range, as well as the area around Qalat Said Ahmadan. To the north, the viewshed extends up to the mountains west of Rania, named Kuh-i Resh, which were crossed by routes from the kingdom of Muṣaṣir. Moreover, at least two passes across the Zagros fall within the visibility range, namely Kane Rhash and Zinui-Augaugir, both providing access to the Sardasht plain in Iran, where the Kingdom of Ḫubuškia was located. Therefore, both Qalat-i Dinka and Gawr Miran had an ideal vantage point for controlling a great portion of the Peshdar Plain up to its northernmost fringes, the Lower Zab course as far as the passage to the Ranya Plain, the mountain ranges dividing the Peshdar from the Ranya Plain, plus the mountain passes leading to the area of Ḫubuškia, crossing the Zagros *chaîne magistrale*. During the period of Assyrian control over the Peshdar

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[78] Tsuneki et al. 2016.

Plain, both Qalat-i Dinka and Gawr Miran could have been used as an ensemble to guard a vast range of communication paths both within and beyond the Empire's borders. Fig. 10 shows the results of the visibility network analysis that uses the same parameters as the viewshed analysis above. Here, it is possible to see that Qalat-i Dinka and Gawr Miran constitute an ensemble in that both could provide views of other sites of the Peshdar Plain through a network of mutual fields of vision that eventually led to the Ranya Plain. In this system, a beacon signal that began at one of these sites could have been transferred across the network, alerting others throughout a considerable area of the Peshdar Plain.

7. Conclusions: emerging archaeological evidence on the Assyrian defensive system in the Peshdar Plain

Recent archaeological fieldwork undertaken in the Peshdar Plain has started to shed new light on the materiality of the defensive strategies that the Assyrians implemented after the creation of the Palace Herald province in this area in the late 9th century BCE. The Peshdar Plain Project's investigations at the Dinka Settlement Complex have revealed a settlement founded prior to the Assyrian arrival which underwent considerable change after the Assyrian conquest of the area, including the construction of an artificial irrigation system designed to boost agricultural output in order to better serve the economic and administrative needs of its new rulers. In Qalat-i Dinka, the citadel of the Dinka Settlement Complex, some structures have been unearthed that point to the existence of a fortified citadel, where local elites may have resided. The Assyrians may well have reused a previously-existing citadel, as it was ideally situated in the plain for controlling several routes.

Our visibility analysis has demonstrated that, in conjunction with the site of Gawr Miran, the Dinka Settlement Complex citadel represented an ideal observation point for extending the level of visibility along the Lower Zab up to the northernmost riches of the Peshdar Plain, where routes going to both the Ranya plain and the kingdom of Muṣaṣir existed. This range of visibility could also extend as far as the passes through the Zagros chain leading to the Iranian plateau, towards the kingdoms of Mannea and Ḫubuškia. Together with other Iron Age sites in the area, the Qalat-i Dinka–Gawr Miran system contributed to a much larger communication and surveillance network that on the one hand enabled close monitoring of strategically important and sensitive pathways along which people and goods destined for the imperial core area could safely travel, and on the other hand facilitated the early identification of potential threats to the Empire, which could then be signalled along the network's communication lines.

This picture, drawn from the analysis of recent fieldwork results in the Peshdar Plain, seems to correspond to the "chains of fortresses" as known from the contemporary Assyrian textual sources. Intriguingly, however, our analysis demonstrates that this fortress system did not run along the border separating the Assyrian holdings from the neighbouring polities. Instead, the network of fortifications guarding the Lower Zab, and the accompanying communication lines, led deep into the Assyrian territories. While future fieldwork is expected to further improve our understanding of the Assyrian defensive system on the Empire's eastern border, the results of the present analysis offer important data also for the assessment of the Empire's other border and contact zones, such as the Upper Tigris region, the Cilician plain, or the southern Levant.

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The Ancient Orient Museum Tokyo

Two small settlements in the shadow of the expansion of the Assyrian Empire

Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma in Syria

1. Introduction

The Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo conducted two excavation projects in western Syria between the 1970s and 1990s. The first was at Tell Ali al-Hajj on the Syrian Euphrates, and the second at Tell Mastuma in the Idlib district in northwestern Syria (Fig. 1). Reports on the two excavations were published in 2009 and 2014, respectively.[1]

Both Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma are relatively small sites with late Iron Age layers that correspond to the Neo-Assyrian/Neo-Babylonian periods (Fig. 2), and the results of the excavations undertaken there provide data for reconstructing the integration of these regions of Syria into these large-scale states and for better understanding imperial rule over the provinces.[2] The goal of this short paper is therefore to draw attention to Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma in the Age of Empires.

2. Tell Ali al-Hajj on the Syrian Euphrates

Tell Ali al-Hajj is located on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River, in the now submerged area of the Tabqa Dam Reservoir in northern Syria. The excavations started in 1974 under the direction of Namio Egami (who later became the director of the Ancient Orient Museum) and continued until 1980. Tell Ali al-Hajj occupies an area of about 2 ha, with a diameter of 150 m and a height of 10 m (Fig. 3), and is therefore quite small when compared to the much larger sites in its vicinity, such as Tell es-Sweyhat and Tell Hadidi (both occupying about 40 ha). The nearest major Iron Age site is Tell Ahmar (ancient Masuwari / Til Barsip / Kar-Salmānu-ašarēdu “Trading quay of Shalmaneser”), located 40 km upstream from Tell Ali al-Hajj. The site is located on a terrace overlooking the Euphrates River between the arable land along the river and the dry hinterland.

The excavations undertaken at Tell Ali al-Hajj revealed that, despite its small scale, the site had been inhabited for approximately 2,000 years between the periods from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age, although this timespan includes a period when the site was not inhabited. The lowest level (Level XI) corresponds to the latter half of the Early Bronze Age, followed by the Middle Bronze Age (Levels VIII-V), during which a defensive wall was built

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[1] Iwasaki et al. 2009; Ishida et al. 2014.
[2] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 381.

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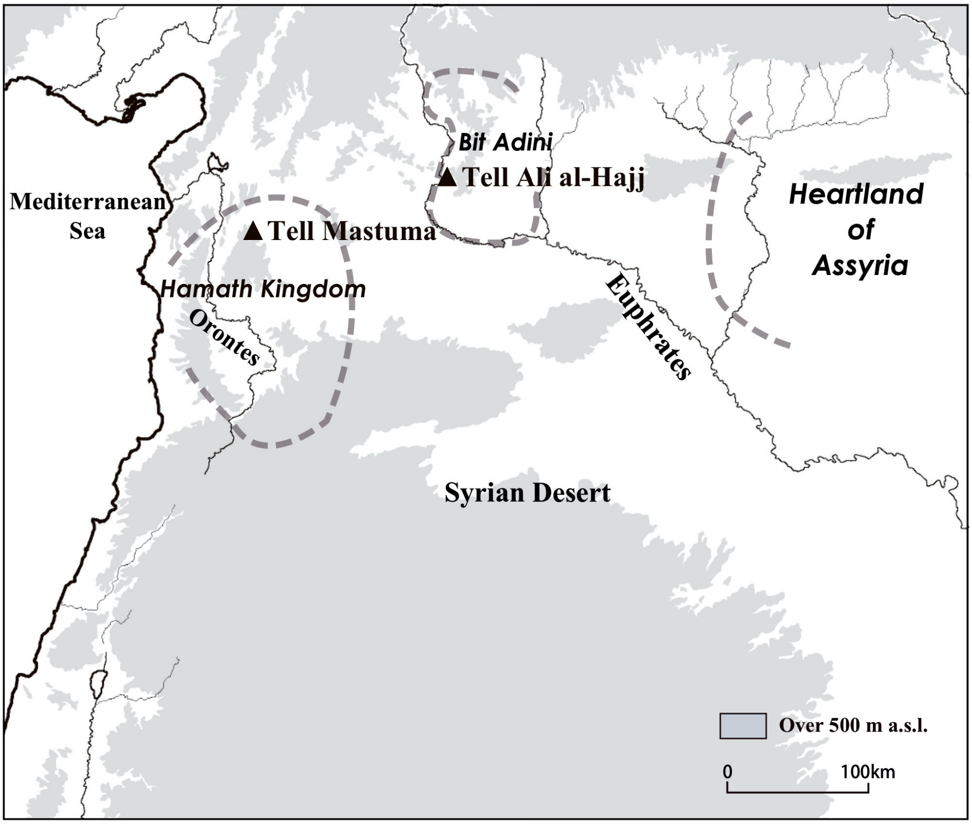
Bit Adini
Tell Ali al-Hajj
Mediterranean Sea
Tell Mastuma
Heartland of Assyria
Hamath Kingdom
Orontes
Euphrates
Syrian Desert
Over 500 m a.s.l.
0
100km

Fig. 1: The location of Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

around the site while the excavation of private houses revealed many *in situ* finds, including terracotta house models (Level VI).[3] After an interval of about seven centuries when the site was abandoned, Tell Ali al-Hajj was reoccupied in the first half of the first millennium BCE, with Levels IV-I corresponding to the Middle to Late Iron Age. The remains of the uppermost Level I were badly damaged by later cemeteries and pits dating to the Hellenistic or medieval periods.

Tell Ali al-Hajj lies in the region known as Bit-Adini during the early first millennium BCE. According to the Assyrian textual sources, Shalmaneser III of Assyria (858–824 BCE) invaded Bit-Adini and captured its capital city Til Barsip in 856 BCE, taking away 22,000 prisoners.[4] Bit-Adini was then annexed and turned into an Assyrian province, namely the border march of the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*).[5] Level IIIa corresponds to this time, as the single available AMS radiocarbon date yielded a result of 932–832 calBCE for this level. It is worth stressing that no signs of destruction that could be linked to the Assyrian invasion were observed at the site.

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[3] Shimogama 2018: 630-631.

[4] Sader 1987: 71-72.

[5] Radner 2006: 48 no. 12.

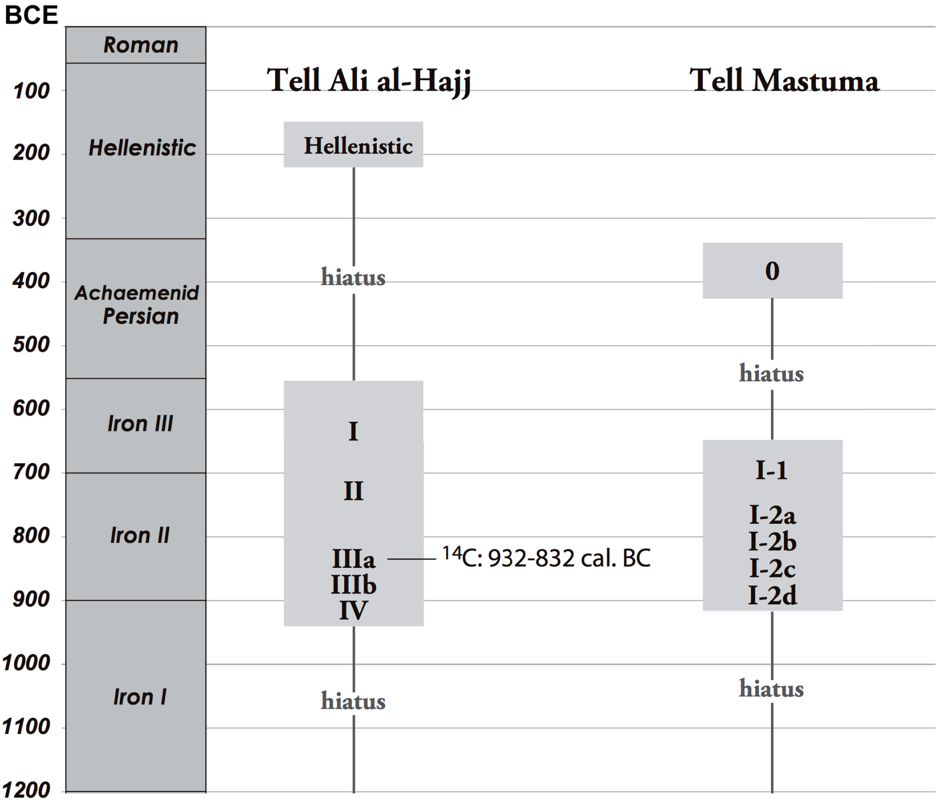

Fig. 2: Chronological table (adapted from Ishida et al. 2014: fig. 3.5).

While the walls of the buildings of the Level IV settlement are thin and irregular, the settlement of Level II had a well-organized layout with lanes and streets, the houses were well-appointed with multiple rooms and straight walls, and a thick outer wall was built around the settlement (Fig. 4). As before in the Middle Bronze Age, Tell Ali al-Hajj had once again become a substantial town. Level II is considered to correspond to the time of the Neo-Assyrian occupation of the site, and the town and fortification wall were presumably built under Assyrian control. Tell Ali al-Hajj controlled one of the crossing points of the Euphrates, which separated the Assyrian territories to the east of the river from the neighbouring states in western Syria. Therefore, this small settlement may have served a military role. Although we have no radiocarbon datings for Level II, this prosperous period in Tell Ali al-Hajj's history was likely contemporary with the time of the well-known commander-in-chief Samši-ilu in the first half of the 8th century BCE, who controlled the western territories of the Assyrian Empire from his capital city Til Barsip.[6] Some impact of Assyrian cultural influence can be discerned in the pottery assemblage: while the pottery of the Iron Age levels up to Level III can be described as local, a drinking cup in a style frequently encountered in the Assyrian

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[6] Grayson 1996: 231-236.

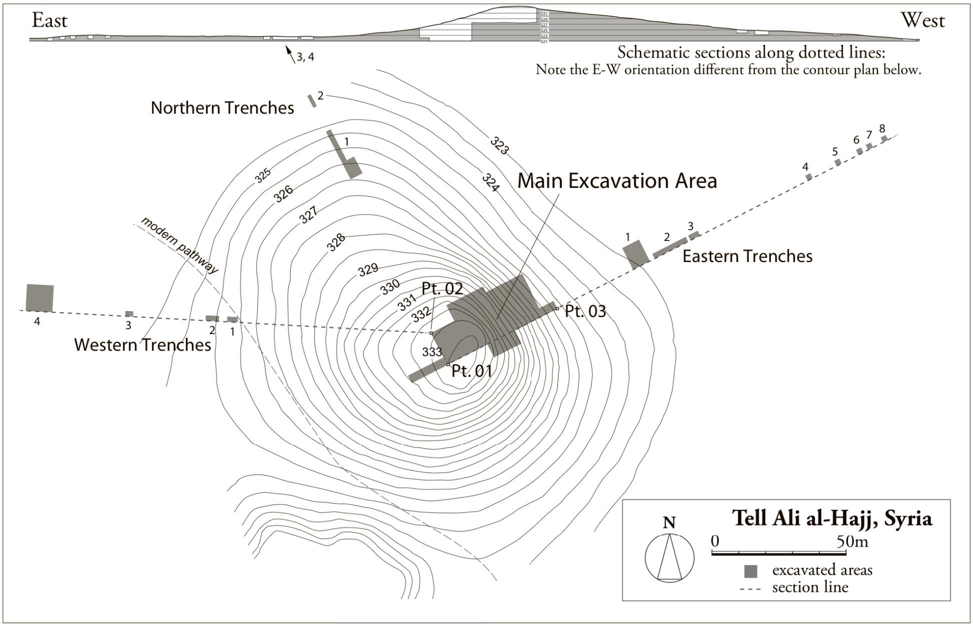
East
West
3, 4
Schematic sections along dotted lines:
Note the E-W orientation different from the contour plan below.
Northern Trenches
2
1
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
Main Excavation Area
modern pathway
Eastern Trenches
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
4
3
2
1
Western Trenches
Pt. 02
Pt. 03
Pt. 01
N
Tell Ali al-Hajj, Syria
0
50m
excavated areas
section line

Fig. 3: Plan of Tell Ali al-Hajj. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

heartland was found as part of the pottery assemblage of Level II (Fig. 5, left).[7] In addition, also a type of iron arrowhead that is commonly found in the Assyrian territories was excavated in Level II (Fig. 5, right).[8]

In the topmost level of Tell Ali al-Hajj (Level I), we can observe a significant transformation of the settlement. The houses of the previous period had been abandoned, but on the crest of the settlement mound the remains of a rectangular building with thick walls were uncovered. Even though the condition of these remains is poor due to destruction caused by the digging of pits and tombs in the Hellenistic and medieval periods, this construction does not seem to be a private house, but is interpreted to have served military and / or administrative purposes, functioning as a fort.[9] Perhaps this fort served as a road station that controlled the important crossing of the Euphrates River. Similar remains from that period have also been found upstream along the Euphrates at Tell Jurn Kebir[10] and downstream at Tell Sheikh Hassan.[11] In Level I, some multi-coloured glazed pottery was found, which is similar to pottery from such Neo-Assyrian sites as Dur-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad) on the Khabur and, on the Tigris, Assur, Fort Shalmaneser at Kalhu (Nimrud) and Khirbet Qasrij (Fig. 6).[12] Based on the associated pottery, it is thought that the Level I structures were in use in the 7th century BCE and that this use continued into the first half of the 6th century BCE, during the period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, when Tell Ali al-Hajj is thought to have been abandoned.

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[7] Shimogama 2014b: 174, 176, fig. 6.67, 13.

[8] Tsumoto 2014: 262, 264, fig. 6.95, 22.

[9] Shimogama 2014a: 69.

[10] Eidem and Pütt 1999.

[11] Boese 1995; Makinson 1999.

[12] Shimogama 2014b: 181-182: fig. 6.72, 29.

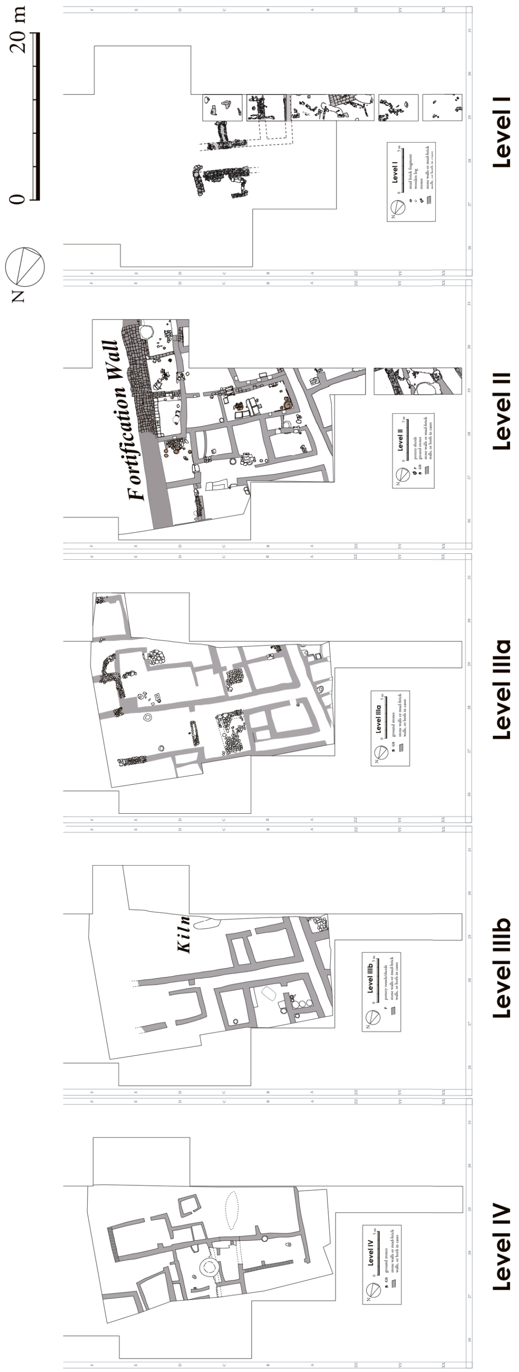
20 m
0
N
Level I
Fortification Wall
Level II
Level IIIa
Kiln
Level IIIb
Level IV

Fig. 4: The architectural remains of the successive Iron Age levels at Tell Ali al-Hajj (adapted from Ishida et al. 2014). Note that the later period disturbances affecting Level I are not depicted.

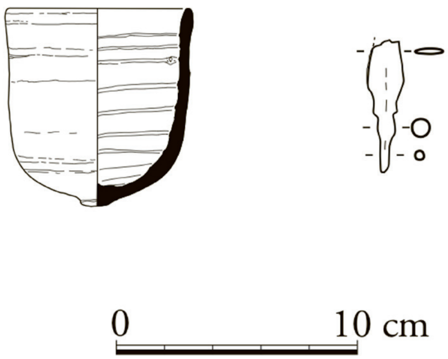

Fig. 5: “Assyrianizing” finds from Tell Ali al-Hajj, Level II. Left: Drinking cup; right: arrowhead. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

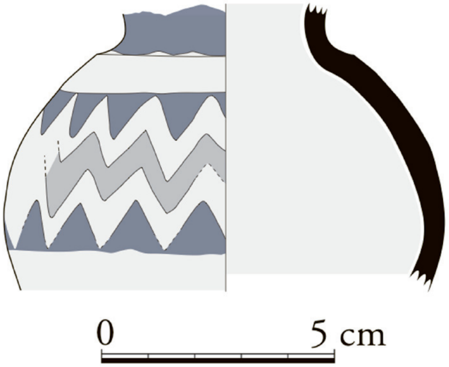

Fig. 6: Multi-coloured glazed pottery from Tell Ali al-Hajj, Level I. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

3. Tell Mastuma in northwestern Syria

Tell Mastuma is located in the Idlib district of northwestern Syria. 15 km to the east of this site lie the settlement mounds of Tell Mardikh (ancient Ebla) and Tell Afis. Of these, Tell Afis (ancient Hazrak / Ḫatarikka) is the dominant regional site in the Iron Age and rose to prominence around 800 BCE as the capital of the kingdom of Hamath under the usurper Zakkur, who erected a stone stele with an Aramaic inscription there.[13] Tell Mastuma was likely one of its dependent settlements.

Tell Mastuma is a nearly circular settlement mound with a diameter of about 200 m and a height of 18 m (Fig. 7). The site is ideally located between the flat plain with rich agricultural lands to the east and the limestone hills used for orchards to the south and west. After the conclusions of the excavations at Tell Ali al-Hajj, the Ancient Orient Museum started an excavation project at Tell Mastuma in 1980 under the direction of Namio Egami and, from 1993, Shigeo Wakita, which continued intermittently until 1995. The final report was published in 2009.[14]

The excavations showed that the occupation of this site began in the Neolithic period, and continued intermittently through the Early Bronze Age until the Middle Bronze Age. The settlement area reached its largest extent in the Early Bronze Age, when there are clear indications that olive trees were cultivated by the inhabitants. Like Tell Ali al-Hajj, the site was abandoned at the end of the Middle Bronze Age and not resettled for almost 700 years, until around 900 BCE during the Iron Age period. Except for some limited occupation during the Achaemenid period (Stratum 0), the site was largely abandoned in the Late Iron Age.

Based on the location and the perceived similarity of the ancient and modern names, several scholars have identified Tell Mastuma with Aštammaku, one of the “royal cities” of the

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[13] For the Zakkur inscription see e.g. Noegel 2006.

[14] Iwasaki et al. 2009.

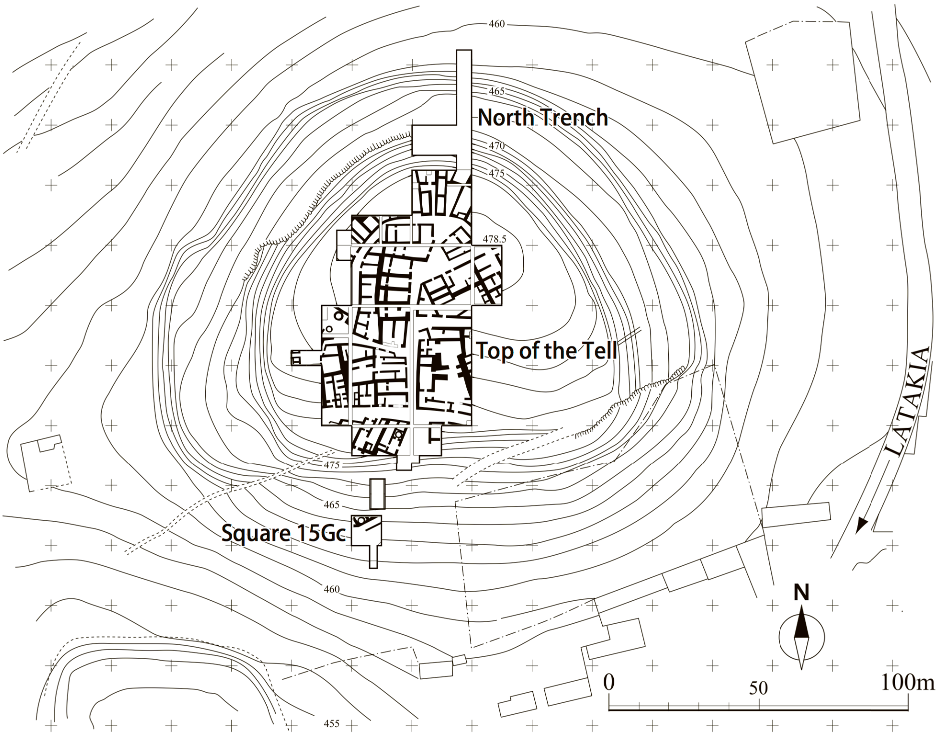

Fig. 7: Plan of Tell Mastuma illustrating the Iron Age remains. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

kingdom of Hamath[15] mentioned by Shalmaneser III of Assyria in his inscriptions.[16] The Iron Age levels of Tell Mastuma were designated as Stratum I, subdivided into the earlier Stratum I-2 and the later Stratum I-1. In turn, Stratum I-2 was subdivided into (from the lowest to the highest level) Stratum I-2d, Stratum I-2c, Stratum I-2b, and Stratum I-2a (Fig. 8).

At the end of Iron Age I or at the beginning of Iron Age II, a settlement with a circular plan was built (Stratum I-2d). The residential area was expanded (perhaps inward) and the settlement reached its peak in Stratum I-2b, when a public building (most likely a temple) occupied the site's southern side. At the time, the settlement had an area of approximately 1 ha and was densely built-up, with a semi-circular road and central avenue that seem to have been the result of planning. Although it is difficult to determine any exact date, the Stratum I-2b settlement is roughly datable to around 800 BCE and thought to be contemporary to the period when the capital of the kingdom of Hamath was moved to nearby Hazrak / Ḫatarikka by the usurper Zakkur.[17]

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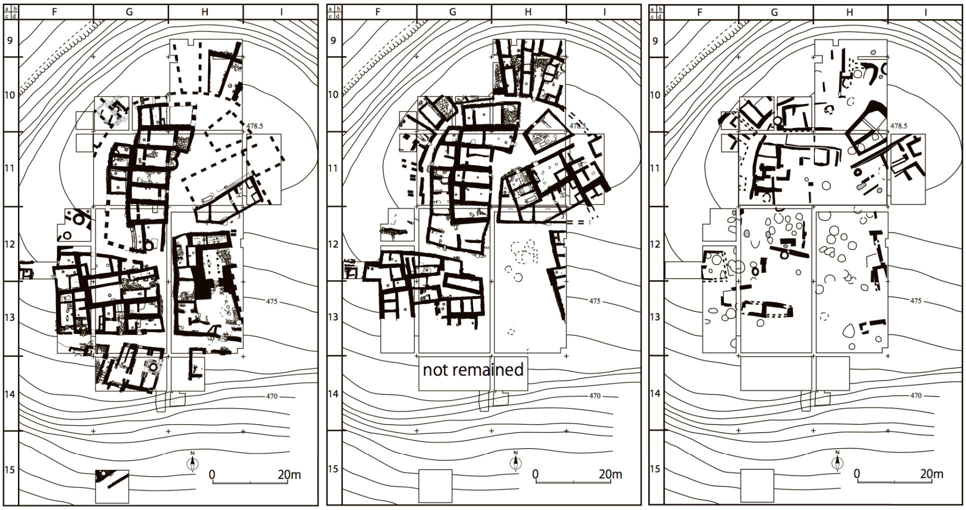
[15] Grayson 1996: A.0.102.6 iii 1 (URU.*áš-tam-ma-ku*); A.0.102.8: 37′ (URU.*áš-ta-ma-ku*); A.0.102.16: 75′ (URU.*ab-*⸢*ta*⸣*-ma-ku*; note the variant spelling); A.0.102.82: 1 (URU.*áš-ta-ma-ku* URU MAN-*ti-šú šá*. ^{PN}*ir-ḫu-le-e-ni* KUR.<*ḫa*>*-ma-ta-a-a* "Aštammaku, the royal city of Irhulenu of Hamath," as a label accompanying the depiction of the capture of the city on the bronze bands of the temple gate from Balwat).

[16] Ikeda 1979; Sader 1987: 195-199; Yamada 2000: 170-177.

[17] Nishiyama 2012.



Stratum I-2b Stratum I-2a Stratum I-1

Fig. 8: The architectural remains of the successive Iron Age strata at Tell Mastuma. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

This settlement continued into Stratum I-2a. Although the residential blocks were maintained, the public building of Stratum I-2b was abandoned and the place it had occupied was turned into an open space. In Stratum I-1, the abandonment of dwellings continued and increased, and the southern half of the settlement was almost completely deserted (Fig. 8). The remains attributed to this stratum are poorly preserved due to the damage caused by numerous later ash pits and other intrusions from Stratum 0 (dated to the Achaemenid Period).

The settlement of the Stratum I-1 was reduced to almost half the size in Stratum I-2. It is difficult to assign any precise dates, but the assumption is that the settlement of Stratum I-l was totally abandoned in the first half of the 7th century BCE. Therefore, the strata I-2a and I-1 are thought to correspond to the period under Assyrian rule in the latter half of the 8th century BCE, after the kingdom of Hamath had been conquered by Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BCE) and its regions had been integrated into the Assyrian Empire as the

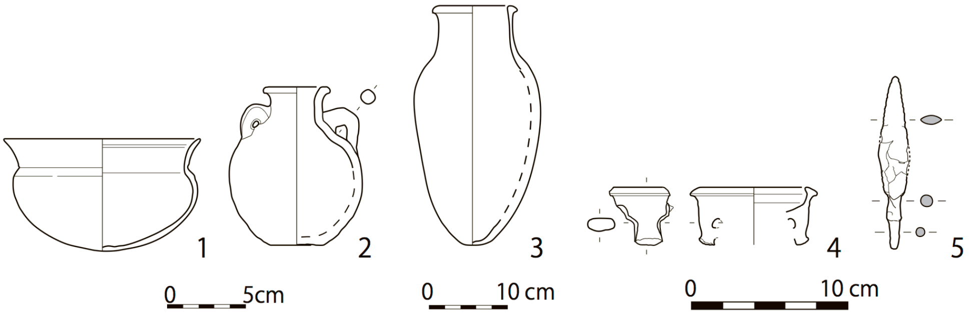


Fig. 9: “Assyrianizing” finds from Tell Mastuma, Stratum I-1. © The Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo.

provinces of Ḫatarikka und Ṣimirra in 738 BCE, and as the provinces Ṣubutu und Manṣuāte in 732 BCE.[18] Tell Mastuma would have been located in the province of Ḫatarikka, centred on nearby Tell Afis.

Whereas the settlement of Tell Ali al-Hajj seems to have reached its peak during its time under Assyrian rule, with the construction of its fortification walls and of well-organized buildings, the settlement at Tell Mastuma seems to have experienced a decline after its integration into the Empire. The excavations at Tell Mastuma revealed only a few finds that indicate the direct cultural influence of the Assyrian Empire. In Stratum I-1, a thin-walled carinated bowl was found that has good parallels in the Assyrian heartland (Fig. 9: 1);[19] carinated bowls are attested at the site as early as in Stratum I-2c.[20] Examples of pottery finds that may indicate a connection with the Assyrian heartland include a glazed juglet (Fig. 9: 2),[21] a bottle (Fig. 9: 3) that was found in a tomb from Stratum I-1,[22] and a glazed container with legs (Fig. 9: 4).[23] Furthermore, an iron arrowhead (Fig. 9: 5) from Stratum I-1 is similar to arrowheads found in sites throughout the Assyrian heartland.[24]

A survey conducted by an Italian team headed by Daniele Morandi Bonacossi around Tell Mishrifeh (ancient Qatna; located in the southern parts of the kingdom of Hamath and later integrated into the Assyrian Empire) has indicated that in this region, the number of settlements increased during the Early Iron Age and declined in the Late Iron Age (7th century BCE), and various potential contributing factors for this decline were proposed, notably worsening climatic conditions (aridification) and political factors such as the integration of the regional kingdom into the much larger Assyrian state in the late 8th century BCE and the Assyrian Empire's policy of forced migration.[25] While no comparable surveys have been conducted in that region, also in the northern parts of the kingdom of Hamath, the smaller settlements like Tell Mastuma seem to follow the same trajectory of decline observed in the survey around Tell Mishrifeh, while large urban centres such as Tell Afis continued to flourish under Assyrian rule, and also subsequently during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.[26]

3. Conclusions

Exploring small settlements such as Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma that lie in the vicinity of major urban centres (Tell Ahmar and Tell Afis, respectively) adds another perspective on the effects of the territorial expansion of the Assyrian Empire. Both Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma can be shown to have grown at a steep rate around 900 BCE, matching a general tendency observed throughout Syria and Mesopotamia by T. J. Wilkinson as a result of his intensive surveys around Tell es-Sweyhat in Syria and Tell al-Hawa in Iraq.[27]

[18] Radner 2006: 58 no. 50 (Ḫatarikka), 61 no. 54 (Manṣuāte), 62 nos. 60 (Ṣimirra) and 61 (Ṣubutu), 66 no. 83 (on the fact that there is no Assyrian province of Hamath).

[19] Wada 2009b: 360.

[20] Wada 2009b: 364, fig. 6.16.

[21] Wada 2009b: 386, fig. 6.31, 45.

[22] Wada 2009b: 382, fig. 5.17b.

[23] Wada 2009a: 308, fig. 5.3, 8.

[24] Tsumoto 1997: 59, fig.1: 8; Nishiyama 2009: 480, fig. 8.30: 9.

[25] Morandi Bonacossi 2007.

[26] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 389; Soldi 2009.

[27] Wilkinson and Tucker 1995; Wilkinson 2004; Wilkinson et al. 2005.

Tell Ali al-Hajj on the Euphrates was integrated into the imperial holdings in the mid-9th century BCE after the conquest of the kingdom of Bit-Adini and came to enjoy prosperity under Assyrian rule. On the other hand, Tell Mastuma was part of the kingdom of Hamath, which was integrated into the imperial province system in two steps in 738 and 732 BCE, and this site experienced an irrecoverable economic decline following the Assyrian conquest. The results of the Ancient Orient Museum's excavations therefore highlight the fundamentally different effects of the Assyrian Empire's territorial expansion into the west in the 9th century under Shalmaneser III and in the second half of the 8th century under Tiglath-pileser III and his successors.

Both Tell Ali al-Hajj and Tell Mastuma were abandoned at the end of the Neo-Assyrian period, or perhaps at some point during the subsequent Neo-Babylonian period. Following a larger trend that emerges also from excavations of other small sites undertaken elsewhere in Syria, these two small settlements remained (largely) unoccupied during the Achaemenid period.

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The monuments of the Neo-Babylonian kings as an indication for their presence in the western territories of their empire

1. Introduction

Unlike the preceding Neo-Assyrian kings, the Neo-Babylonian rulers left little documentation of their actions, policies, and administrative structures in the western territories of their empire, especially the region on the Mediterranean, which they called Eber-nāri. Only two Neo-Babylonian kings left signs of their presence there: Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 BCE) and Nabonidus (555–539 BCE). This paper collects the available sources, examines them for information concerning the Neo-Babylonian kings' control over this region and analyses how they represented themselves and their royal power in the western regions.

2. Nebuchadnezzar II

2.1 Nebuchadnezzar II in the west according to literary sources

Many scholars have thought that after the Babylonians succeeded the Assyrians, they adapted the systems and organizations of the latter to rule over the western part of the empire, but this idea is now criticized.[2] The Neo-Assyrian kings already lost control over most of their former territories in the west around 620 BCE, and afterward the region was undoubtedly ruled by local kings under the strong influence of Egypt.[3] The Babylonian Chronicles mentions the presence of the Egyptian army as far north as Syria; the Egyptians were in Ḫarrān to help the Assyrian ruler Aššur-uballiṭ II[4] during the 16th year of Nabopolassar (610 BCE), and were at Carchemish and crossed the Euphrates in 605 BCE. In that year, which was the 21st year

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[2] For example, Vanderhooft 2003; Lipinski 2006: 83; Da Riva 2009: 270. Note, however, that Zorn 2014: 835 emphasizes that there was a "continuity in material culture and personnel" at the Syrian sites of Dūr-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad) on the Khabur and Til Barsip (Tell Ahmar) on the Euphrates.

[3] Master 2018 describes a close relationship between the southern Levant (Phoenicia and Philistia) and Egypt even in the eighth century BCE (and until the end of seventh century BCE) on the basis of the archaeological material.

[4] For the question whether he was ever accepted as king by the Assyrians, see Radner 2018.

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of Nabopolassar, Babylonian troops under Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish.[5] After the expulsion of the Egyptian army, the Babylonians seized the entire country of Hamath and established a headquarters in Riblah, but they were apparently not able to secure the region. In fact, the Chronicle records that Nebuchadnezzar needed to make successive expeditions against Syria (Ḫatti) from the very beginning of his reign.

According to the Etemenanki Cylinder, a building inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II,[6] the western territories of the Babylonian Empire were divided into three areas: Ḫatti (Syria), Eber-nāri (Levant), and Nēberti-Puratti (Upper Syria). Ḫatti and Nēberti-Puratti were governed by provincial governors (*pīḫatu* or gìr.níta = *šakkanakku*), while Eber-nāri was under the sovereignty of local kings.[7] We find also that the Ḫarrān Stele of Nabonidus includes the expression "people of the land of Akkad and the land of Ḫatti,"[8] which means that Syria was under Neo-Babylonian administration in the period of Nabonidus, while in other places his inscriptions state that his kingdom bordered on Egypt.[9]

As for Syria, two texts show that a provincial governor (*pīḫatu*) of the Neo-Babylonian Empire was settled in Arpad, in the vicinity of Aleppo.[10] The texts, written in Sippar in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (587 BCE), record the offering of oxen (one ox in each text) for the temple of Šamaš. Francis Joannès infers that the governor of Arpad was in charge of accompanying Jewish deportees following the second capture of Jerusalem.[11]

In the Levant, Nebuchadnezzar took Ashkelon, plundered it, and seized its king in his first year (604 BCE), according to the Chronicle.[12] In his 7th year, as is well known, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and deported Judeans, including the Judean king Jehoiachin, who remained in Babylon with his sons and attendants.[13] Later, Zedekiah, king of Judah, rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem and deported Judeans again in 587/6 BCE. The Book of Jeremiah describes Zedekiah's meeting with the kings of Edom, Ammon, Moab, Sidon, and Tyre to discuss the plan of a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar in 594 BCE (Jer 27), but in the end, these kings did not participate in his revolt. At the time of the first plunder of Jerusalem, Edom was generally cooperative with Nebuchadnezzar.[14] After the second conquest, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah as an "administrator in the land of Judah."[15] The Judean deportees, or at least some of them, were settled at a settlement called Āl-Yāḫūdu ("The town of Judah") situated in Babylonia, cultivating fields belonging to the Neo-Babylonian royal administration and paying taxes, as the cuneiform archives of Āl-Yāḫūdu show.[16]

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[5] Glassner 2004: 222-227.

[6] For an edition see Da Riva 2008: 19-23.

[7] In ll. 103–118, the Etemenanki Cylinder mentions "the provincial governors (*pīḫatātim*) of the land of Ḫatti, from the Upper Sea, to the Lower Sea, the land of Sumer and Akkad, the land of Assyria, all of them, the kings of far-away districts in the midst of the Upper Sea, the kings of far-away districts in the midst of the Lower Sea, the governors (gìr.níta) of Ḫatti, of Nēbertu-Purattu" (translation adapted from Da Riva 2008: 12).

[8] Ḫarrān Stele i 32, ii 6, iii 18 (edition: Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 187-192 Nabonidus 47; Schaudig 2001: 486-599).

[9] Ḫarrān Stele iii 18; Adad-guppi Stele i 42 (edition: Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 223-228 Nabonidus 2001; Schaudig 2001: 500-513).

[10] CT 56 439 and Nbk 73; see Joannès 1994; Vanderhooft 2003: 246.

[11] Joannès 1994.

[12] Glassner 2004: 228-229. The more recent excavations in Ashkelon have "borne witness to Nebuchadnezzar's total and catastrophic destruction of the city in 604 B.C.E." (Master 2018: 79).

[13] We know this on the one hand from the Bible (2 Kg 25:27–30) and on the other hand from Babylonian ration lists which record the supplying of oil and barley to the Judean king, his five sons, and eight Judeans. These were published by Weidner 1939: Text B (= Babylon 28178 = VAT 16283), obv. ii 38–40; Text C (= Babylon 28186 = VAT 16378), obv. col. ii 10–11, 17–18; Text D (= Babylon 28232), ll. 20–21.

[14] Crowell 2007: 77.

The Babylonian ration lists which mention the Judean king also record supplies of food for people from Tyre, Ashkelon (including two sons of the king, Agaʾ), Byblos, and Arwad,[17] and we know of the presence in Babylon of other deportees from Levantine Cities at the same time. The well-known inscription today called the *Hofkalender* also mentions the kings of the Phoenician and Philistine cities, Tyre, Gaza, Sidon, Arwad, and Ashdod, as "guests," or rather prisoners, following a list of Babylonian officials and nobles.[18] Although the date of composition of this inscription is still being debated,[19] its text (col. ii 25) mentions the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar (598/7 BCE), and the inscription is generally considered to reflect the situation at that date.

Concerning the siege of Tyre by the Neo-Babylonian king, it has been difficult to reconstruct its chronology. According to Josephus, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre from the 7th year of his reign for thirteen years. At that time, Tyre was under the rule of its king Itobaal. After the siege, a king named Baal ruled the city for 10 years. After that, "judges," who were not native kings, governed the city for seven years and three months. H. Jacob Katzenstein, however, believed that Josephus's statement should be amended to say that the siege began in the 7th year of Itobaal, which was Nebuchadnezzar's 20th year (585 BCE).[20] This reconstruction has been widely accepted, but questioned by certain scholars. Hanspeter Schaudig, for example, placed the time of the siege between the 7th and 20th years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, following the description of Josephus.[21] Caroline van der Brugge and Kristin Kleber argued that the siege must have begun in Nebuchadnezzar's 17th year (588/7 BCE) and ended in his 30th year (575/4 BCE).[22] We also have another complex question about Tyre, relating to the chronology of the siege: there are a series of administrative cuneiform documents written in a city called Ṣurru (Tyre), which belong to the Eanna archives of Uruk and the Ebabbar archives of Sippar, dated to the 31st–42nd years of Nebuchadnezzar.[23] Francis Joannès argued that these texts for the most part refer to a settlement in Babylonia of deportees from Tyre, although a few texts may mention an expedition to, or military service in, Phoenician Tyre.[24] While this view has generally been accepted, Kristin Kleber recently objected to this opinion.[25] Adding four texts dated to Nebuchadnezzar's fourteenth year to this group, she argued that the city was not a village of deportees in Babylonia, but rather Tyre on the Medi-terranean coast, and that these texts refer to economic and administrative activities carried out by Babylonian temples in the Levant. Finally, Stefan Zawadzki, accepting Katzenstein's chronology, remarks that some documents belonging to this group relate to a military conflict in Tyre in the last years of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, and proposed that there was a second uprising in Tyre after the siege.[26] In any case, it would not be surprising if there was a village of deportees from Tyre in Babylonia following the siege, since we know of the existence of Āl-Yāhūdu and the case of deportees from Neirab[27] on the one hand, and also the presence of a village of Tyrians (Bīt-Ṣurrāya) in Babylonia in a later period from the Murašu archives, on the other hand.

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[15] 2 Kg 25:22–25; Jer 40:7ff.

[16] Pearce and Wunsch 2014.

[17] Weidner 1939: 928-929. We note that Tyrian deportees, more than 300 people at a minimum (126 + [x] + 190), were much more numerous than deportees from other lands.

[18] Da Riva 2013a.

[19] For a summary of discussions on the date of composition of the so-called *Hofkalender*, see Zawadzki 2015: 277 n. 4.

[20] Katzenstein 1997.

[21] Schaudig 2008.

[22] van der Brugge and Kristin Kleber 2016. For the previous literature on the siege of Tyre, see the summary provided by Zawadzki 2015.

[23] Joannès 1982; 1987; Zawadzki 2003; 2008; 2015; Kleber 2008.

[24] Joannès 1982; 1987.

[25] Kleber 2008: 141-154.

Generally speaking, Nebuchadnezzar conquered the Levantine cities and occupied them temporarily, but thereafter local kings re-emerged in each. Unlike Ḫatti, he did not (or was not able to) integrate them directly into the Neo-Babylonian administrative organization.[28] His interest in the Levantine cities, in addition to pressuring Egypt, must have been primarily in amassing wealth from maritime trade and natural resources received as tribute, exploiting the Levantine workforce in Babylonia, and controlling some of the transportation routes for natural resources like cedar and possibly aromatic plants from Arabia.

2.2 The monuments of Nebuchadnezzar II in Lebanon

Although we have some documentation of this Neo-Babylonian king's policies in the west, the existence of inscriptions and reliefs which Nebuchadnezzar left on rock faces in Lebanon attests directly to his presence in the area. Currently, these monuments are being (re)studied by Rocío Da Riva. First, we will summarize them.

2.2.1 Nahr el-Kalb

Nebuchadnezzar's inscription at Nahr el-Kalb is located at the mouth of the Nahr el-Kalb (Arabic "Dog River"), 12 km north of Beirut. There, 22 miscellaneous stelae, reliefs, and commemorative inscriptions created from the 13th century BCE onward until the 20th century were found on two rocky promontories,[29] "facing each other, separated by the valley where the Nahr el-Kalb flows."[30] The place was, therefore, considered at least from the time of the Egyptian New Kingdom's control of the Levant to be a "place of social memory."[31]

The inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II is located on the northern promontory, while the others are mainly on the southern side. According to Rocío Da Riva, Nebuchadnezzar put his inscription opposite those of the enemy kings of Assyria and Egypt.[32] The inscription is in two versions: the one in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform signs follows a first version that used archaic signs. Da Riva thinks that it may contain the same text as the twin inscriptions at Brisa,[33] but only fragments of the text have been deciphered. They report the construction of temples in Babylonian cities like Babylon, Sippar, Larsa, Marad and Borsippa; offerings to Marduk and Zarpanītu in the Esagil temple in Babylon; and, in a poor state of preservation, the conquest of Lebanon.[34] A representation of the king, if it originally existed, is no longer visible.

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[26] Zawadzki 2015. See also Zawadzki 2003; 2008.

[27] Tolini 2015. For previous literature, see Tolini 2015: 59-60 n. 9.

[28] Hasegawa 2020 suggests that the Babylonians built an administrative centre at Tel Rekhesh, a site located in the north of Israel. A building in a Mesopotamian architectural style with a central courtyard, which can be dated to the end of the seventh and the early sixth centuries BCE, was excavated there. It may have functioned as an administrative centre in the Neo-Babylonian period. We have, however, no textual documentation to confirm this.

[29] Maïla-Afeiche 2009: 11.

[30] Da Riva 2016: 118.

[31] Da Riva 2016: 121.

[32] Da Riva 2016: 120.

2.2.2 Wadi Brisa

The inscriptions and reliefs of Wadi Brisa[35] are carved on the rock walls of a ravine located north of the Biqāʿ Valley, near the cedar forests in the mountains north of Lebanon. The Babylonians were able to reach the cedar forests from the town of Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar established his headquarters following the expulsion of the Egyptian army, and they transported trees from there to Babylonia by water (via the Orontes river, then the Euphrates). Nebuchadnezzar describes in the inscriptions how he exploited the mountains and built a passage leading to the Orontes river in order to transport the cedars he had cut down.[36] There are two inscriptions with the same text and two different reliefs. One relief shows a man in front of a tree with an inscription in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform on the east side of the valley, and on the opposite side, we find a relief portraying a man — apparently king Nebuchadnezzar himself — fighting a lion, with an inscription in archaizing cuneiform script.[37] The inscriptions, particularly the archaized version, are among the most complete texts by Nebuchadnezzar. Despite the rich content, Da Riva indicates that there was "careless planning and organization of space in the inscriptions."[38]

2.2.3 Shir es-Sanam

At Shir es-Sanam,[39] located 20 km northeast of the Brisa inscriptions, a relief and a few lines of cuneiform text are engraved on a rock wall (2.4 × 6.2 m). The relief depicts Nebuchadnezzar wearing a conical headdress and long robe, with a long staff, and there are three astral symbols (the sun, the moon, and a star) in front of him. There are six columns with about 70–80 lines of text in Neo-Babylonian cuneiform, but only "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon" can be read.[40]

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[33] Da Riva 2016: 119.

[34] Da Riva 2016: 119.

[35] Concerning the preceding studies on the inscriptions at Brisa, see Da Riva 2012a: 11-12.

[36] Da Riva 2010: 173; 2012a: 10.

[37] Da Riva 2012a: 11.

[38] Da Riva 2012a: 29. In a more recent article, Da Riva 2018 suggests that the inscription in Neo-Babylonian script was abandoned while still incomplete because of an error in the arrangement of the text. However, given the fact that the inscription at Nahr el-Kalb also consists of two versions in different scripts, I wonder if at least the two versions using the Neo-Babylonian and the archaic scripts were planned from the beginning of the construction.

[39] Da Riva 2010: 175-176; 2013b: 88-91.

[40] Da Riva 2010: 175; 2013b: 91.

2.2.4 Wadi es-Saba

There are two reliefs in the ravine of Wadi es-Saba,[41] about 30 km from Shir es-Sanam. The first relief (Wadi es-Saba 1; 2.39 × 2.93 m in size) depicts the standing king with three astral symbols. Although the figure is only partially preserved, we can see a long staff and conical headgear, which were typically Neo-Babylonian features, supporting the conclusion that this figure is likely to be Nebuchadnezzar. The other relief (Wadi es-Saba 2; 2.35 × 4 m) depicts the king fighting a lion. This is also attributed to Nebuchadnezzar, although its quality is poorer than that of his other reliefs. There are a few signs, but they are not clearly visible. The two sites, Wadi es-Saba and Shir es-Sanam, are located on a commercial and military road between the Biqāʿ Valley and the Mediterranean Sea, accessible from the cedar forest.

2.2.5 Discussion

The locations of the monuments in Lebanon were well selected.[42] The site of Nahr el-Kalb was undoubtedly chosen so that the fact of Babylonian domination would be included in the "collective memory" of kings of various periods. The sites of Brisa, Shir es-Sanam, and Wadi es-Saba offered easy access to the cedar forests, and perhaps also marked mountain passes.[43]

In fact, the text of the inscriptions at Brisa, the only one that remains legible among Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions in Lebanon, mentions his deeds in Lebanon: battles against Egypt, the strongest enemy aside from Assyria, and the acquisition of cedar beams for temples. He describes how he sent his army regularly to Lebanon, expelled the enemy, and reunited the scattered people. It is worth noting that the Cyrus Cylinder describes the return and reunification of deportees: "I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements,"[44] using an expression closely parallel to that in a passage in the inscriptions at Wadi Brisa: "I reunited the scattered people and I brought them back to their place."[45] Bert van der Spek indicated a resemblance between Cyrus's propaganda and the policies expressed in the Cyrus Cylinder and those of the Assyrian kings,[46] but we can add that the Cyrus Cylinder also partly inherited its rhetoric from the inscription of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar then opened the mountain passes, cut down cedars, and transported them to Babylon. He declares that he installed the monument to protect inhabitants against foreign oppressors.

Wadi Brisa C IX, ll. 13–52:

> On that day, Lebanon, the mountain of cedars, the luxuriant forest of Marduk of sweet smell, whose excellent cedars, which [*had*] not [*been used for the cultic*] place (?) of another god, and had not been taken [*for the palace*] of another king, I cut [*with my*

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[41] Da Riva 2010: 176; 2013b: 91-92.

[42] Concerning their geopolitical aspects, see Da Riva 2010; 2015.

[43] Da Riva 2009: 273 mentions this possibility only in passing.

[44] Cyrus Cylinder, l. 32: *kul-lat* un$^{\text{meš}}$-šú-nu *ú-pa-ah-hi-ra-am-ma ú-te-er da-ád-mi-šú-un*. For an edition, see Schaudig 2001: 553, and for an English translation, see Finkel 2013: 7; see also oracc.org/ribo/Q006653/ (translation: J. Novotny; last accessed 19 July 2020).

[45] Wadi Brisa C IX, ll. 31–32: *ni-ša-a-šu sa-ap-ḫa-a-ti ú-*⸢*pa-aḫ-ḫi-ra-am-ma*⸣ *ú-te-er áš-ru-uš-ši-in*. For an edition, see Da Riva 2012: 62-63.

[46] Van der Spek 2014.

> *pure hands*] (…) (Lebanon) where a foreign enemy had exercised rulership, and whose produce (the enemy) had taken by force, so that its people had fled, had taken refuge far away. With the strength of my lords Nabû and Marduk, I sent [*my armies*] regularly to Lebanon for battle. I expelled its (Lebanon's) enemy above and below and I made the country content. I reunited the scattered people and I brought them back to their place. What no former king had done (I did): I cut through the high mountains, I crushed the stones of the mountains, I opened up passes. I prepared a passage for (the transport of) the cedars for the king Marduk. Strong cedars, thick and tall, of splendid beauty, supreme their fitting appearance, huge yield of the Lebanon, I bundled together like reeds of the river(-bank) and I perfumed the Arahtu River (with them), and I set them up in Babylon like Euphrates poplars. I let the inhabitants of the Lebanon lie in safe pastures, I did not permit anyone to harass them. So that nobody will oppress them, I (installed) an eternal image of myself as king to (protect them), (…).[47]

This description confirms the fact that no remnants remained of the administrative organization of the Neo-Assyrian empire in Lebanon, which had been put under Egyptian rule, at the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, during the last years of the 7th century BCE. He visibly asserted his presence, domination and propaganda both by the inscriptions and by the relief.

However, these inscriptions refer mostly to the pious activities of the king in Babylonian cities, such as the rebuilding of temples and offerings to the deities, rather than reflecting the local situation, as do other inscriptions found in Babylonia. Therefore, the inscriptions seem to present Neo-Babylonian ideology, which considered Babylonia, and particularly the city of Babylon, as the centre of the world, unless they were simply codified and formulaic.

The inscriptions were not easily accessible to the local western inhabitants because of their location and the use of cuneiform writing. This means that the text was not primarily addressed to the local inhabitants, even though the king declares that he is protecting them from oppression by the enemy army. Therefore, the text was a manifesto of the king's prestige based on Babylonian ideology and was intended to increase awareness of the king's presence in the west both by Babylonian deities and by future kings.

Nevertheless, the local population could have understood simply from the existence of the reliefs and inscriptions that Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful foreign ruler, even though the message of the reliefs and inscriptions was expressed through Babylonian iconography and writing. The reliefs encode the motifs of "the king fighting a lion" (Brisa, Wadi es-Saba) and "the standing king before three astral symbols" (Shir es-Sanam, Wadi es-Saba). While the representation of the standing king with three astral symbols is familiar in Neo-Babylonian iconography,[48] that of the king fighting a lion is not found in other Neo-Babylonian iconographical sources. Rocío Da Riva indicates that the motif of the king fighting a lion was frequently used in Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals, and suggests that Nebuchadnezzar adopted this Assyrian motif.[49] However, we can suggest another explanation. Francis Joannès states that the city of Babylon was territory reserved for the god Marduk at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and that the king did not manifest his royal prestige within Babylon "so as not to compete with Marduk’s sovereign authority over the territory.”[50] It was rather in the Northern Palace, located outside the city, beyond the double-wall, where Nebuchadnezzar could manifest his glory. Many stone objects, including a large lion in basalt, which were exhibited outside the city in the vast space between the processional way and the terrace supporting the palace, could be considered as the elements of a “public writing” of royal power.[51] In the reliefs in Lebanon, the motif of the king fighting a lion may also be considered to be a representation of the king’s power and prestige. As the location was very far from Babylon and outside Babylonia, the king could here assert his own authority without difficulty. In addition, he represented his piety with the other motif, which was more typical of the Neo-Babylonian kings. Thus, in my opinion, Nebuchadnezzar presented two aspects of himself in his reliefs in Lebanon: as a pious king under the authority and protection of the gods, and as a powerful and prestigious king.

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[47] Translation adapted from Da Riva 2012a: 63.

[48] Concerning the standing figure, see George 2011 and Da Riva 2015.

[49] Da Riva 2018: 26, n.16.

Finally, we can add to this corpus the Babylon Stele of Nabonidus as evidence for Nebuchadnezzar’s presence in the west. According to Hanspeter Schaudig, Nebuchadnezzar brought this stone block, which is marked with what may be the characteristic sign of the Phoenician goddess Tanit and might therefore have been stored in her temple in Tyre, back from Tyre to Babylon, where it was kept in the royal palace until it was used later by Nabonidus.[52] If this hypothesis is correct, this would be an interesting example of the acquisition of natural resources and materials in the west by the Neo-Babylonian kings.

3. Nabonidus and his monuments in the west

Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, was the other king who left inscriptions and monuments in the west. We have a few inscriptions found in Ḫarrān, located in Upper Mesopotamia, a relief located at as-Selaʿ in Jordan, a relief and an inscription at al Ḥāʾiṭ, and a stele and some inscriptions at Taymāʾ, both in Saudi Arabia.

3.1 Ḫarrān

In Ḫarrān, we know of two stelae: the famous Ḫarrān Stele[53] and the Adad-guppi Stele[54] along with a cylinder inscription,[55] inscribed bricks,[56] and some other inscriptions on objects and fragments.[57]

Although the importance of this city for Nabonidus is well known, he was not the first or the only king who gave special attention to the city. According to Jamie Novotny, Ḫarrān might have originated as a trading centre in the third millennium BCE.[58] The city also functioned as the cult centre of the moon-god Sîn since the reign of Zimri-Lim (1774–1762 BCE) at the latest,[59] and its strategic military position was recognized early on by the kings of the Middle Assyrian period, from the end of 14th century BCE. Ḫarrān was respected by Neo-Assyrian kings, especially Sargon II (721–705 BCE), as an important cult centre. Later, it was the last capital of the Neo-Assyrian dynasty after the fall of Nineveh (612–610 BCE).[60] The Eḫulḫul temple, the sanctuary of the moon-god Sîn and the principal shrine of Ḫarrān, built by Shalmaneser III (858–824 BCE) according to the later inscriptions of Ashurbanipal and Nabonidus, was reconstructed by the Neo-Assyrian kings, especially Ashurbanipal, according to Novotny.[61]

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[50] Joannès 2011: 118-119.

[51] Joannès 2011: 117-118.

[52] Schaudig 2009.

[53] Editions: Gadd 1958; Schaudig 2001: 486-599; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 187-192 Nabonidus 47.

[54] Editions: Gadd 1958; Schaudig 2001: 500-513; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 223-228 Nabonidus 2001. This stele, the pseudo-autobiography of Adad-guppi, was installed in Eḫulḫul. The content of the autobiography is exceptional, and no other such document attributable to a woman is known (Lafont et al. 2017: 820).

[55] Donbaz 1987; Schaudig 2001: 472-474; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 185-186 Nabonidus 46.

[56] Donbaz 1991; Schaudig 2001: 342-343; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 195-196 Nabonidus 51.

[57] Schaudig 2001: 545-547; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 193-195 Nabonidus 48–50.

[58] Novotny 2020.

The particular importance of Ḫarrān and Eḫulḫul for Nabonidus is clear from his inscriptions. While the subject of the rebuilding of Eḫulḫul was frequently treated in his inscriptions located in other cities, along with descriptions of the construction of other temples, all of his inscriptions in Ḫarrān speak only of Eḫulḫul in connection with the reconstruction of temples.

Paul-Alain Beaulieu argued that the Ḫarrān Stele expresses the new theology of Sîn centred on Ḫarrān, which Nabonidus tried to introduce in both the text (using motifs borrowed from the literary compositions known as Letter of Samsuiluna and Seed of Kingdom) and in the relief (identifying Ḫarrān with Babylon by the syncretism of Sîn and Nabû).[62] Nabonidus may have intended to "restore a domain covering the entire territory between the Tigris and Euphrates to the moon-god, by reconstructing two major temples: Ur in southern Mesopotamia, and Ḫarrān on the edge of northern Mesopotamia."[63]

3.2 as-Selaʿ (Jordan)

The relief engraved on the rock at as-Selaʿ[64] is located in the district of aṭ-Ṭafīlah, which was part of the country of Edom, in Jordan. "Many archaeological remains in this area show the importance of the site at different periods in its ancient history," according to Stephanie Dalley and Anne Goguel.[65]

The relief, which measures 6 m^2, depicts a standing figure with the typical appearance of a Neo-Babylonian king (a long staff, a conical headdress, and a long robe) and the three astral symbols (the sun disk, the moon crescent, and the Venus star). Unlike the reliefs of Nebuchadnezzar, which depict the king fighting a lion, Nabonidus expressed only his pious attitude, and refrained from showing royal authority, even in Arabia, far from Babylon or Ḫarrān, his religious centre.

There are visible traces of an inscription, but it is badly eroded.[66] Hanspeter Schaudig read "Nabonidus, the king of Babylon" in what is the first line on column iv and indicated that there are traces of more than 30 lines that are largely illegible.[67] We can, therefore, identify the figure portrayed on the relief as Nabonidus because of the inscription and the attire depicted, and this matches the known fact that Nabonidus passed through Edom on his way to Arabia. According to the Chronicle of Nabonidus, the king departed to the west in his third regnal year (553 BCE) to suppress a revolt at Ammanānum.[68] Thereafter the king fell ill but recovered quickly. Afterward, he defeated Amurru, Udummu (Edom), and Šinṭīni (not identified). According to André Lemaire, Nabonidus carved the relief at as-Selaʿ as a memorial of his victory over Edom on his way to Taymāʾ.[69]

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[59] Novotny 2002: 193.

[60] Cf. Robson 2019: 81, 134; also Radner 2018.

[61] Novotny 2020.

[62] Beaulieu 2007. However, as Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 11-12 discuss, there are also good arguments against the notion that Nabonidus intended to elevate the position of the moon-god in the Babylonian pantheon.

[63] Author's translation of Lafont et al. 2017: 827, which reads in the original French: "En ayant restauré les deux sanctuaires majeurs d'Ur, en Mésopotamie du sud, et de Harrān, aux confins de la Mésopotamie du nord, Nabonide rendait au dieu de la Lune un domaine couvrant tout le territoire entre Tigre et Euphrate."

[64] For a recent study of the inscription and relief of as-Selaʿ, based on new fieldwork, see Da Riva 2020.

[65] Dalley and Goguel 1997: 169.

[66] For an edition, see Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 200-203 Nabonidus 55.

In fact, traces of destruction dating back to the mid-6th century BCE were found in Busayra, the largest and only fortified site in the land of Edom, and in two other smaller villages (Tawilan and Tall al-Khalayfi). Some archaeologists consider Nabonidus to have been responsible for this destruction.[70] According to recent work, only the palace and temple were destroyed in Busayra, but not the residential areas and walls. The fact that only monumental and elite buildings were affected leads us to think that Nabonidus attacked Busayra during his travel to Arabia, while the two other sites are probably not related to his expedition.[71]

Turning now to the inscription, after Schaudig's initial decipherment, Crowell reconstructed another four lines containing only a few words: "year 5," "soldiers," "the gate" and "the people,"[72] while Weiershäuser and Novotny read the words: "way/journey/campaign," "year 5," "with each other," and "kings" in these lines.[73] These words may support the destruction of Edom by Nabonidus, but they also show the possibility that the assault was made during the 5th year rather than the 3rd year, as the inscription provides the date, or at least a period between his regnal years 3–5 (553–551 BCE). The date the relief itself was engraved is more difficult to fix, but it must have been sometime between Nabonidus's 3rd and 13th years, the last year of his stay in Taymāʾ.

According to Da Riva, the relief is not inaccessible, but is not readily visible either. If it was a monument to victory over Edom, as accepted by specialists, it seems insufficient as an expression of the prestige and glory of the king or as a proclamation of sovereignty to the local inhabitants. The monument may also have functioned as "mark of ownership" of this important crossing point on the trade route between Arabia and the Levant.

3.3 al-Ḥāʾiṭ (Saudi Arabia)

Al-Ḥāʾiṭ has been identified as the site of the ancient city of Padakku (whose modern Arabic name is Fadak), which is mentioned in the Ḫarrān Stele as a site conquered by Nabonidus. According to the Ḫarrān Stele, Nabonidus traveled to Tēmā (Taymāʾ), where he established his royal residence, and to other cities in Arabia, such as Dadanu (al-ʿUlā), Padakku (Ḥāʾiṭ/Fadak), Ḫibrā (Ḫaybar), Yadīhu (al-Ḥuwayyaṭ), and Yatribu (Medina), for ten years. Thus, the existence of an inscription here confirms that Nabonidus passed through Padakku as mentioned in the Ḫarrān inscription.

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[67] Schaudig 2001: 544.
[68] Glassner 2004: 234-235.
[69] Lemaire 2003: 287-288.
[70] Zayadine 1999: 88.
[71] Crowell 2007: 84.
[72] Crowell 2007: 83, ll. 21′–24′.
[73] Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 201-203 Nabonidus 55: i 11′–15′.

There is a relief and an inscription engraved on a large rock at the site. The relief depicts a figure wearing a conical headdress, a long staff, and a long robe (but with Assyrian fringes), accompanied by three astral symbols (the moon, the sun with wings, and a star), which are Neo-Babylonian features. The inscription has eroded, but it reads "Nabonidus, King of Babylon."[74] The figure was, therefore, identified as Nabonidus without difficulty. According to Arnulf Hausleiter and Hanspeter Schaudig, another symbol is to be found above the three celestial symbols (and there were possibly other symbols in the missing space).[75] This Arabian symbol, which forms a U-shape (and the other lost symbols, if they existed) was probably related to a local god or gods equivalent to the Babylonian gods that are represented by the celestial symbols on the relief. Schaudig suggests that Nabonidus must have paid homage to the local gods, and the relief and inscription could have included references to local powers. If this is correct, this small monument was expected to be seen by local inhabitants, and, by showing his respect to the local gods, Nabonidus intended to let them know who was in charge of the city of Padakku, although they were not able to understand the cuneiform. It might have been part of an attempt at long-term integration of the region under Neo-Babylonian rule.

3.3 Taymāʾ (Saudi Arabia)

Taymāʾ, an oasis city in northwest Arabia, was apparently the final destination of Nabonidus. According to the Ḫarrān Stele, the Babylonian citizens committed sins and sacrilege against Sîn, the king of gods, and his wrath brought a disease of the head and a famine; Nabonidus therefore escaped from Babylon, and, as mentioned above, travelled among the Arabian cities of Taymāʾ, Dadanu, Padakku, Hibrā, Yadīhu, and Yatribu for ten years. The so-called Verse Account of Nabonidus also mentions the king's travels.[76] According to the text, he set out on a long journey with his soldiers to Taymāʾ, slew the king of the city with weapons, slaughtered the inhabitants and established his royal residence there. The Verse Account is a biased document, but the narrative about the king's conquest and occupation of Taymāʾ "reflects the king's own view."[77] If we rely on the description in the Verse Account, although Nabonidus says that the sacrilege of the Babylonian people against the god Sîn caused his departure, the motive must have been a military campaign rather than escape from Babylon. The economic importance of Northern Arabia and its wealth from trade were likely his real motivation.[78] In addition, "Nabonidus could not expand northward because of Cyrus's power, so he tried to expand southward, and taking over North Arabia would make his Empire geographically much more coherent."[79]

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[74] Joannès 2014; Hausleiter and Schaudig 2016; for a new edition, see Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 198-199 Nabonidus 54.

[75] Hausleiter and Schaudig 2016.

[76] Verse Account, ii 20′ ff. For an edition, see Schaudig 2001: 563-578. The Verse Account is a propaganda text, which was likely composed shortly after the conquest of the Babylonian Empire by Cyrus in 539 BCE; see Beaulieu 2007: 137; Zawadzki 2010: 151, n. 38; and also Waerzeggers 2012. From this composition emerges the image of "Nabonidus the mad king" but, as Beaulieu 2007: 137 emphasizes, "the text presents itself as a criticism of policies more than personality."

[77] Beaulieu 1989: 172.

[78] Concerning the wealth of the Northern Arabia, see, e.g., Beaulieu 1989: 181-183; Eichmann et al. 2006: 163; Da Riva 2015: 622.

[79] Lemaire 2003: 290.

In Taymāʾ, a stele and five cuneiform fragments have been found. Additionally, we have six inscriptions written in the North Arabian script, the so-called “Taymanitic,” which probably refer to some officials in connection with Nabonidus.

The stele includes a relief of the king with the typical Neo-Babylonian costume — conical headdress and the long staff — and three celestial symbols (the sun, the moon, and a star), and a fragmented inscription, of which only twenty-five lines remain.[80] It apparently mentions precious stones and other tribute, the restoration of the Esagil temple, and names of Babylonian gods like Marduk, Zarpanītu, Tašmētu, and Nanaya. According to Schaudig, “as far as the text is preserved, it presents a typical Neo-Babylonian votive inscription.”[81] The preserved text corresponds to the first part of the inscription, and should be followed by descriptions on Babylonia, Syria/Cilicia, North Arabia, Taymāʾ, and finally “Nabonidus’s favourite topic: the restoration of the cult of the moon-god Sîn in his temple Eḫulḫul at Ḫarrān.”[82]

The other partially preserved inscriptions seem to mention the names of temples, such as Esagil, Ezida, and Eḫulḫul in Ḫarrān, and those of Babylonian gods, such as Marduk and Ištar. These texts are also considered to be formulaic.

However, the existence of other texts, using North Arabian signs, is interesting. These inscriptions include several personal names and are accompanied by formulas like “the servant (or overseer) of Nabonidus, the king of Babylon,” except for one.[83] Hani Hayajneh remarks, “the writers of the inscriptions came with Nabonidus on his expedition to Taymāʾ.”[84] The names are not Arabic, but Aramaic or Akkadian (one may be Elamite); there are “some words that might be close to Aramaic or Akkadian, but with Arabic syntax and morphology.”[85] In consequence, Hayajneh believes that these individuals were ethnically Arabs who bore non-Arabic names and resided in the Babylonian kingdom, rather than “Arameans or Babylonians who were acquainted with the Taymanitic script and language.”[86] In any case, we find traces of the Neo-Babylonian administration in Taymāʾ, using the local language and script.

4. Conclusions

During the short period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, not even ninety years long, only two of rulers left tangible marks of their presence in the west. Nebuchadnezzar II left inscriptions and reliefs on rock faces in Lebanon, which indicated his ownership or domination of regions that yielded natural resources such as cedar and stone or that occupied strategic locations. These monuments undoubtedly functioned as tools for expressing the power, prestige, and authority of the king himself, as well as his piety, which was an expected characteristic of Neo-Babylonian kings. We can contrast Nebuchadnezzar with Nabonidus, who presented himself in his reliefs, even in the west, not as a hero fighting a lion (which represents the king’s power and authority), but exclusively as a pious figure who requested divine protection. We can, however, find no traces of systematic administrative control of the west. Nebuchadnezzar's interest in that region concerned above all economic exploitation: natural resources and manpower.

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[80] Schaudig 2020; also Schaudig in Eichmann et al. 2010: 137-138; Hausleiter and Schaudig 2016; Weiershäuser and Novotny 2020: 203-205 Nabonidus 56.

[81] Schaudig 2010: 136.

[82] Schaudig 2020.

[83] Hayajneh 2001.

[84] Hayajneh 2001: 83.

[85] Hayajneh 2001: 91.

[86] Hayajneh 2001: 91.

However, the case of Nabonidus is more complex. First, all of the inscriptions in Ḫarrān focused on his construction of Eḫulḫul and emphasized his pious attitude toward Sîn and the other gods of Ḫarrān (Ningal, Nusku and Sadarnunna). This indicates Ḫarrān's specific position of religious importance, and may even imply his effort to make the city a religious centre with or in place of Babylon. The monument at as-Selaʿ, located in the ancient country of Edom, was probably commemorative of his victory, but may also signify the ownership or the domination of an important trade route. In Arabia (al-Ḥāʾiṭ and Taymāʾ), although the inscriptions in Akkadian cuneiform seem to be standardized, the relief of al-Ḥāʾiṭ shows a local symbol, and there are inscriptions written in the local script at Taymāʾ, which probably suggests that Nabonidus intended closer control over Arabia than did Nebuchadnezzar in the Levant, likely due to his interest in the wealth of the region. Nevertheless, his sojourn in Arabia apparently did not introduce the Neo-Babylonian provincial administrative system into the region. He would have not had enough time to accomplish that.

In conclusion, for the Neo-Babylonian kings, the western territories were mainly an area for the exploitation of resources. They left no trace of systematic and continuous Babylonian rule in this region. Instead, they merely expressed their (personal) presence by setting up monuments.

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The conquest and reorganization of the land of Zamua / Mazamua in the Assyrian Empire

1. Introduction

The land of Zamua / Mazamua is attested in the documentary sources of Assyria from the late tenth to seventh century BCE. It is located in the western flanks of the Zagros Mountains and corresponds approximately to the modern province of Sulaymaniyah in Iraqi Kurdistan, occupying a strategic juncture accessible from Assyria, Babylonia, and the Zagros countries. In the ninth century BCE, the land of Zamua / Mazamua was annexed into the Assyrian provincial system, and the resultant province was maintained until the collapse of the Assyrian Empire, serving as the major gateway to more remote Zagros countries, such as Mannea, Parsua, Namri, and the Median territories. This paper discusses the process of the creation of the Assyrian province of Zamua / Mazamua, its demographic composition, and the administrative military order in the region, as well as some religious-cultural issues relating to it, while reviewing documentary sources that originate from the Assyrian core area, the Sulaymaniyah region, and its surroundings.

2. The Assyrian advances to Zamua until the reign of Ashurnasirpal II

Several Middle Assyrian kings of the 13th to 11th centuries BCE, namely Adad-nerari I, Shalmaneser I, Tukulti-Ninurta I, Aššur-reša-iši I, and Tiglath-pileser I, claimed their victories over the people of the western Zagros, called Lullu(mī) – an archaic-traditional name corre-

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sponding to the later, native designation of the land as Zamua.[2] The region may occasionally have been an arena of competition for political hegemony between Assyria and Babylonia,[3] although the land of Lullu(mī) apparently remained outside of the Middle Assyrian provincial organization.[4]

More detailed information about the contact of the Assyrians with the land and people of Zamua is only given in sources from the Neo-Assyrian period. The earliest Neo-Assyrian documentary evidence concerning the region is found in the royal inscriptions of Adad-nerari II (r. 911–891 BCE) and his successors. Two versions of Adad-nerari II's annals include a parallel passage, which is the earliest testimony for an Assyrian military advance on Zamua:

> "Valiant man who marched, putting trust in the god Aššur his lord, from the other side of the Lower Zab, along the land of Lullumī, the Habhu-rough-land, (that is) Zamua, as far as the passes of the land Namri, and subdued the extensive land of Qumanu as far as the lands Mehru, Salua, and Urartu."[5]

Here, KUR.*Lullumī* is, as already stated, an archaic-traditional geographical term that can be equated with KUR.*Zamua*, a native land name used at that time. KUR.*Habhi* is not the name of a specific land, however; it seems to be the term explaining the landscape of Lullumī / Zamua as a rough, mountainous land.[6] The reference to Zamua formulated in this long epithetic nominal phrase is placed before the annalistic campaign account of the king's eleventh to nineteenth years (901–894 BCE).[7] Thus, a campaign or campaigns to Zamua must have been undertaken in the earlier years of the king's reign, although the details remain unknown.

A fragmentary text on the stone stele of Tukulti-Ninurta II (r. 890–884 BCE) from Nineveh bears the titles and epithetic phrases describing the extent of the king's military activities. The text reads as follows:

> "[Palace of Tukulti-Ninurta, king of the world, king of Assyria] son of Adad-nerari (II), king of the world, king of Assyria, son of Aššur-dan (II) (who was) also king of the world, king of Assyria. [The conqueror of … in] its entire[ty]. The king, who conquered from the other side of the Tigris to the land of Hatti […], all the lands of Na'iri, the land Suhi until [the city Rapiqu, from the pass of] the land Habruri to the land Gilzanu – Apā, king of Hubuškia, [his hand cap]tured – from the pass of the land of Babitu to [Mount Hašmar, the land of Zamua] in its entirety, from the Lower Zab river [to the city Til-abari which is] upstream along the Zab, the lands Hirimu (and) Harutu, [fortresses

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[2] Klengel 1988: 166-167.

[3] Fuchs 2011: 244-260.

[4] For the provincial organization in the Middle Assyrian period, see Jakob 2003: 111-140; Radner 2006: 43; and Llop 2012.

[5] RIMA 2 A.0.99.2: ll. 23–25; A.0.99.4: ll. 13´–16´: *eṭlu qardu ša ina tukulti Aššur bēlišu ištu ebertān Zābe šupalī šiddi* KUR.*Lullumī* KUR.*Habhi* KUR.*za-mu-a adi nēribi ša* KUR.*Namri illikūma* KUR.*Qumanī rapašta adi* KUR.*Mehri* KUR.*Salua u* KUR.*Urarṭi ana šēpīšu ušeknišu*.

[6] For Habhu, see the study of Fuchs 2000, who discerned five distinct Habhu regions in the wide mountainous lands surrounding northern Mesopotamia. According to Fuchs 2000: 73-74, the most eastern Habhu region bordered on Karalla to the north, Namri to the south, Zamua / Lullumī to the west, and Parsua to the east. I believe, the area called Habhu could have included Zamua / Lullumī, as suggested by the quoted passage of Ashurnasirpal II's text.

[7] RIMA 2 A.0.99.2.

> of Kar]duniaš, from the city Ṣuṣu which is upon the Tigris to [… D]ur-Kurigalzu to the cities Sippar-Šamaš and Sippar-[Annunitu]. (The stele) belonging to the palace of the city Nēmed-Tukulti-Ninurta."[8]

The lines can be restored in line with a similar passage in the summary of conquests found in an inscription of Ashurnasirpal II.[9] In these restored lines, Tukulti-Ninurta II apparently claims conquest of the entire land of Zamua. The western border of Zamua is defined here as the "pass of the land of Babitu" (modern Bazian pass) and the eastern border as "Mount Hašmar" (modern Darband-i Khan), which apparently corresponds to "the pass of the land Namri" in the above-quoted inscriptions of Adad-nerari II.

The inscriptions of the succeeding king, Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BCE), report his extensive military enterprises in Zamua, which established the permanent Assyrian presence therein, while disclosing the geo-political situation of the region at the time. Two of his inscriptions, the annals inscribed on the slabs from the Ninurta temple at Kalhu and the so-called Nimrud Monolith, include a parallel account of his campaigns against Zamua, undertaken in his third and fourth regnal years (881 and 880 BCE = eponym years of Aššur-iddin and Miqti-adur).[10] Following on from a number of previous studies,[11] I develop my geo-political reconstruction based on this account; for the ease of the reader, local toponyms are given in **bold type** upon their first mention while the names of local rulers are set in ***bold italics***.

2.1 The first campaign in Ashurnasirpal II's third year (881 BCE)[12]

The major military target was the land of **Dagara**. The expedition was defined as a punitive campaign against ***Nūr-Adad***, the leader of Dagara, who had rebelled against Assyria. As known from the claims of Adad-nerari II and Tukulti-Ninurta II, the land of Zamua had apparently earlier accepted Assyrian suzerainty, but it seems that the Assyrian control was far from strong.

The rebellious Nūr-Adad is called "the sheikh of Dagara" (LÚ *na-si-ku šá* KUR.*da-ga-ra*). He was probably the head of a local tribal league and supported by other leaders of Zamua, mentioned in the text as "the entire land of Zamua."[13] Dagara was apparently a major polity comprising the city of Babitu, and Uzē, Berutu, Lagalaga, three fortified cities (*āl dannūti*) with their 100 satellite villages. The latter city, Lagalaga, is mentioned as being situated between the city Babitu and the Radanu River (Tauq Çay, a tributary of the ʿUzaim) in the so-called Zamua Itinerary.[14] Thus, it is certainly located in the Radanu valley to the west of the river,[15] east to the pass of the city Babitu (= mod. Bazian pass). The land of Dagara was probably extended in the upper valleys of the Tauq Çay and Tanjero River, east of Babitu.[16] The Assyrians conquered those cities, killing enemy troops and taking cattle and people, which included 1,200 troops.

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[8] RIMA 2 A.0.100.6: ll. 1–10: ^{1} [É.GAL $^{\text{PN}}$TUKUL-MAŠ MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR.*aš-šur*] A 10-ÉRIN.TÁH MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR.AŠ A *aš-šur*-KAL-*an* MAN ŠÚ MAN KUR.AŠ-*ma* ^{2} [*kāšid … a-na paṭ gi*]*m-ri-šá* MAN *ša* TA <*e*>*-ber-ta-an* ÍD.HAL.HAL *a-di* KUR.*hat-te* ^{3} […]-*ša* KUR.KUR.*na-i-ri a-na paṭ gim-ri-ša* KUR.*su-hi a-di* ^{4} [URU.*ra-pi-qi* TA *né-re-bi ša*] KUR.*hab-ru-ri a-di* KUR.*gíl-za-a-ni* $^{\text{PN}}$*a-pa-a* MAN URU.*hu-ub-uš-ki-a* ^{5} [… *i*]*ṣ*$^{?}$*-bat* TA *né-re-be ša* KUR.*ba-bi-te a-di* ^{6} [KUR.*ha-áš-mar* KUR.*za-mu-a s*]*i-hir-ti-šá* TA ÍD.*za-ba* KI.TA ^{7} [*adi tíl-a-ba-ri šá*] *el-la-an za-ban* KUR.*hi-ri-mu* KUR.*ha-ru-tu* ^{8} [*bi-ra-a-te*.MEŠ KUR.*kar*]-*du-ni-áš* TA URU.*ṣu-ṣi ša* UGU ÍD.HAL.HAL *a-di* ^{9} [… URU.B]ÀD-*ku-ri-gal-zi a-di* URU.*si-pur ša* $^{\text{d}}$*šá-maš* URU.*si-pur* ^{10} [*ša …* ŠU-*s*]*u ik-šu-du šá* É.GAL-*lim ša* URU.*né-med*-$^{\text{PN}}$TUKUL-$^{\text{d}}$MAŠ; see also Thompson 1929: 117-118, pl. xli: no. 1.

[9] RIMA 2 A.0.101.53. Mostly following the restoration of Thompson 1929: 117; cf. Frahm 2014: 179a.

[10] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 23–89; A.0.101.17; ii 77–iii 137´.

[11] Especially, Speiser 1928; Levine 1972; Liverani 1992; Greco 2003; and Radner in Altaweel et al. 2012.

[12] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 23–33 // A.0.101.17: ii 77–107.

[13] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 24: KUR.*za-mu-a ana si-hír-ti-šú a-ha-iš iṣ-bu-tú* "The entire land of Zamua had banded together."

Another conquered city was **Bāra**, located on the plain of **Mount Nimuš**[17] outside the land of Dagara (but apparently not far from it), as revealed in the account of the next campaign. Mount Nimuš is the mountain known as the resting place of the ark from the flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic, and modern scholars unanimously identify it with the Pir-a Magrun (Fig. 1; and see below, §2.2).

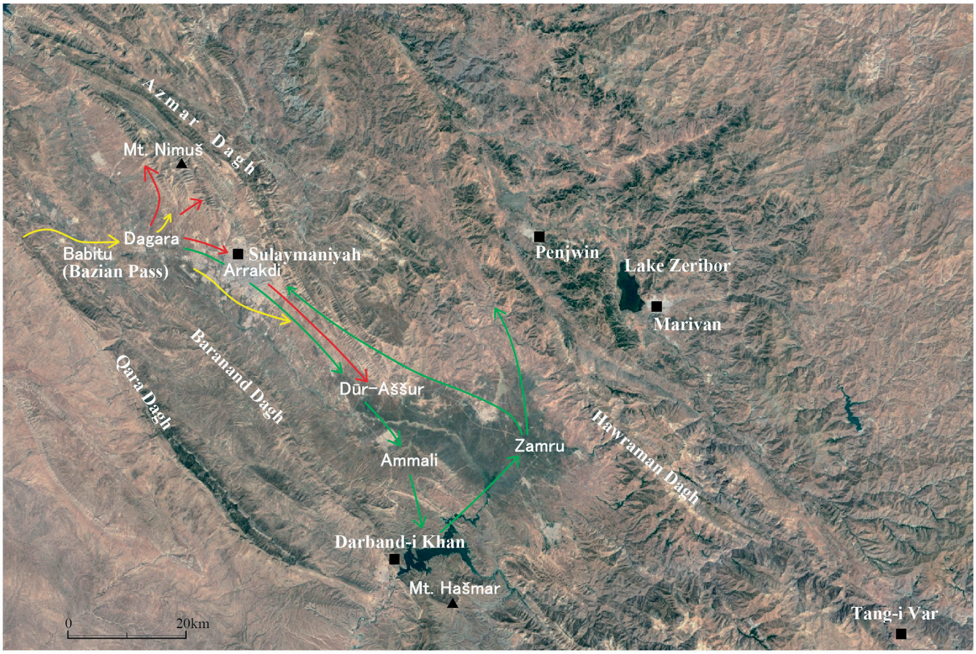

Fig. 1: The land of Zamua and Ashurnasirpal II's campaign routes. In yellow: first campaign (881 BCE), in red: second campaign (881 BCE), in green: third campaign (880 BCE). Prepared by the author with the assistance of Ms Naoko Hironaga.

2.2 The second campaign in Ashurnasirpal II's third year (881 BCE)[18]

This campaign started on the 15th day of the month of Tishri of the same year (881 BCE), obviously not long after the previous campaign. The Assyrian army went again through the pass of **Babitu**, now without encountering any resistance, and advanced to attack the cities on the foot of **Mount Nimuš** (Mount Kiniba in the language of the Lullu(mī); modern Pir-a Magrun), the highest mountain peak located at the northwestern edge of the Tanjero basin, between Baranand Dagh and Azmar Dagh. The attacked cities included **Bunasi** / **Bunisu** (variant: **Bunaisu**), **Larbusa**, **Dūr-Lullumu**, **Bāra**, with 150 satellite villages.[19] Bunasi was walled, as it is being called "a fortified city" (*āl dannūti*). The leader of Bunasi was ***Muṣaṣina*** and that of Larbusa was ***Kirteara***.[20] After battling, "all the kings of the land Zamua" (*šarrāni ša* KUR.*Zamua ana sihirtišunu*) paid the tribute of surrender (horses, silver, and gold) and accepted the duty of regular tribute payments to Assyria (horses, silver, gold, barley, straw, and corvée labour).

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[14] K 4675+; editions: Levine 1989; SAA 11: no. 14.

[15] Levine 1989: 86.

[16] Speiser 1928: 15-17; Liverani 1992: 46.

[17] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 39: EDIN KUR.*ni-muš*.

[18] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 33–49 // A.0.101.17: ii 107–iii 26.

Subsequently, the Assyrian army is said to have started out from the city **Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat**, which is mentioned here for the first time and therefore in unclear topographical context. Because of its name, the city must previously have been occupied and renamed by the Assyrians, most likely under either Adad-nerari II or Tukulti-Ninurta II, as they reported military activities in the land of Zamua in their inscriptions (see above, §2). There are two suggestions regarding the location of Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat, whose local name was **Arrakdi**: Bingird near Muhan,[21] or at a site near Sulaymaniyah. [22] The latter, northwestern location is supported by the fact that the place of origin of the seller of seven people in the fragmentary document from Tell Sitak, 10 km northeast of Sulaymaniyah, appears to be the city of Arrakdi.[23] This location also better matches the continuation of the 881 BCE campaign, which still seems to have taken place within the territory of Nūr-Adad of Dagara.

From Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat, the Assyrian army took the route "to / along **Mount Nispi**" (*šēp* KUR.*ni-ís-pi aṣṣabat*), marching all through the night in order to reach the remote cities located between **Mount Gamru** and **Mount Edinu**, which Nūr-Adad "made his fortresses" (*ša Nūr-Adad ana dannūtišu iškun*). Upon arrival, the Assyrians conquered and burnt the city of **Berutu**. Mount Nispi is probably identical with Mount Nišba, the sacred mountain worshiped as a god of Simurrum.[24] Mario Liverani identified Mount Nispi with the Hewrāmān range.[25] Thus, he argued that this Berutu is different from the city with the same name mentioned in the account of the first campaign as a fortified city of Nur-Adad, despite the fact that in both accounts of the two consecutive campaigns, Berutu was assigned to the same ruler, Nur-Adad. However, I am inclined to argue that there is only one city of Berutu and that the attestations refer to one and the same place, and to assume that the army moved in and around the territory of Nūr-Adad along the Fauq Çay, in the Tanjero valley and the nearby mountains during the entire campaign.

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[19] The cities Bunasi and Larbusa are said to have had 30 and 50 "cities" (*ālāni*) in their environs, respectively (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 34–35, 39–40), and later the 150 "cities" are mentioned as belonging to Larbuseans, Buniseans and Bāreans, all together (RIMA 2: A.0.101.1: ii 44–45).

[20] Radner 2017 suggests identifying Larbusa with Tell Sitak, located 10 km northeast from Sulaymaniyah on the slope of the Azmar Mountain range, where a fragment of a Neo-Assyrian contract was excavated.

[21] Speiser 1928; cf. Liverani 1992: 49.

[22] Levine 1989: 86-87; Radner 2017: 427-428.

[23] Radner 2017: 426: obv. 7´: A URU.*A*-⌜*rak*⌝-[*di*].

[24] Radner in Altaweel et al. 2012: 10-13.

[25] Liverani 1992: 49; also Radner in Altaweel et al. 2012.

2.3 The third campaign in Ashurnasirpal II's fourth year (880 BCE)[26]

This campaign is again described as a punitive campaign, this time, however, against ***Ameka*** and ***Araštua***, who had withheld the tribute; the rebellion was no doubt connected to the cities of Nūr-Adad, Muṣaṣina, and Kirteara that had been attacked in the previous year.

Entering through the pass of **Babitu** and crossing the Radanu River (Tauq Çay), the king's army tarried at the foot of **Mount Simaki** and received the tribute of the land of **Dagara**. Then, the king crossed the Turnat River (Diyala), reached, destroyed, and burnt the city of **Ammali**, the fortified city (*āl dannūti*) of ***Araštua***, and the city **Hudun**, also destroying the city **Kiṣirtu**, the fortified city (*āl dannūti*) of ***Ṣabīni***, as well as "the villages belonging to the city **Bāra**, the person ***Kirteara***, and the cities of **Dūra** and **Bunisu**" (URU.DIDLI *šá* URU.*ba-ra-a-a šá* $^{\text{PN}}$*ki-ir-ti-a-ra šá* URU.*du-ra-a-a* KUR.*bu-ni-sa-a-a*), as far as the pass of **Mount Hašmar** (Darband-i Khan). Thus, the expedition extended over the entire area of the Tanjero Basin and its surroundings, from Pir-a Magrun in the northwest to Darband-i Khan in the southeast, including the Shahrizor Plain, in which Ammali was probably located.[27]

Passing between **Mount Lara** and **Mount Bidirgi**, the army probably moved east to approach **Zamru**, the royal city (URU MAN-*ti*) of ***Ameka***, who was called "the **Zamuaean**" (KUR.*za-mu-a-a*). Ameka took to a mountain while the Assyrians looted his palace at the city, and reached **Mount Etini** to loot his treasures from there, too. Speiser and Liverani searched for Zamru in the Takabia (Gogasur) valley, southwest of Penjwin.[28] However, Alessandro Greco preferred to situate it in the Shahrizor Plain, while assuming that its influence extended also to the Takabia Valley and a part of the Shahrizor Plain.[29] The Assyrians destroyed and burnt **Zamru**, alongside other cities and villages of Ameka.

The Assyrian army then moved on to destroy the cities of ***Ata***, who ruled from the city of **Arziza** (URU.DIDLI *šá* $^{\text{PN}}$*a-ta* URU.*ar-zi-za-a-a*), including two fortified cities (*āl dannūti*): Arziza itself and **Arsindu** on Mount Nispi, the mountain mentioned in the second campaign as being situated between Arrakdi and Berutu (a part of Azmar Dagh?). Afterwards, the army went down to the city of **Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat** / **Arrakdi** in the Tanjero Valley. At this stage, tribute was paid from near and distant polities (the land **Sipirmena**, the cities **Hadun** and **Hartišu**, as well as **Hubuškia** and **Gilzanu**), and "all the kings of the land Zamua" (*šarrāni šá* KUR.*za-mu-a*), who now had to accept a heavier duty of regular tax payments (*biltu maddattu … eli ša pān ušātir elīšunu aškun*). **Mesu**, a city fortified by the fleeing local people, was also destroyed.

Again, without a clear topographical context, it is said that Ashurnasirpal II took and rebuilt the city of **Atlila**, which Sibir, king of Karduniaš (usually identified with Simbar-Šipak[30]) had once captured; however, it had been deserted afterwards and turned into ruin hills. The Assyrians are said to have put a wall around the city, founded a palace for royal residence, stored barley and straw therein, and renamed it **Dūr-Aššur**. The already mentioned "Zamua Itinerary" proves the route from Babitu to Dūr-Aššur via Arrakdi before going out to further eastern sites, therefore, Dūr-Aššur must be sought somewhere in the Shahrizor Plain, as unanimously believed. The major tell sites of Bakr Awa and Yasin Tepe have been discussed as candidates.[31]

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[26] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 49–86 // A.0.101.17: iii 27–137´.

[27] Radner 2017b: 212.

[28] Speiser 1928: 27; Liverani 1992: 52.

[29] Greco 2003: 72-73.

[30] Brinkman 1968: 154; 2010: 440.

[31] Speiser 1928; Liverani 1992; Radner 2017b.

Considering the recent archaeological findings from the Neo-Assyrian period at Yasin Tepe, including an elite residence,[32] the latter may be a better candidate.

3. The geo-political landscape of Zamua, as seen in Ashurnasirpal II's campaign accounts

Based on the details of Ashurnasirpal II's campaigns, as discussed in §§2.1–2.3, the following lists the political entities in Zamua:

(1) **The land of Dagara**: It extended from the Babitu Pass (modern Bazian Pass) to the Radanu (Tauq Çay) Valley and likely included part of the Tanjero Valley and of the surrounding mountains. **Uzē**, **Berutu** and **Lagalaga**, three fortified cities (*āl dannūti*), with their 100 satellite villages, belonged to Dagara, which was ruled by the sheikh (*nasīku*) Nūr-Adad.

(2) **The cities at the foot of Mount Nimuš**: They were located north of Dagara, including the cities **Bunasi** (variants: **Bunisu**, **Bunaisu**), **Larbusa**, **Dūr-Lullumu** and **Bāra**, with 150 satellite villages. Two leaders are attested: Muṣaṣina of Bunasi and Kirteara of Larbusa.

(3) **The city of Ammali**: It was ruled by Araštua and located in the eastern part of the Tanjero Basin, probably in the Shahrizor Plain. Its sphere of influence extended eastward to Mount Hašmar (Darband-i Khan). The city of **Hudun**, with 30 satellite villages, and **Kiṣirtu**, the fortified city of Ṣabīn, with 10 satellite villages, were likely under the influence of Araštua, since they were apparently counted among the "cities of Araštua" in the campaign account.[33]

(4) **The city of Zamru**: The city ruled by Ameka appears to have been the most influential polity, located east of Ammali, probably in the eastern part of the Shahrizor Plain. Zamru is the only city called "royal city" (*āl šarrūti*), in which Ameka is said to have held his "palace" (*ekallu*) with his accumulated wealth, including a large number of metal objects. Ameka's realm comprised as many as six fortified cities, possibly extending as far as to the Takabia Valley. Furthermore, and curiously, he is the only person to be called a "Zamuaean" (KUR.*Za-mu-a-a*). This might imply that he represented the land of Zamua as its most influential ruler.

(5) **The cities Arziza** and **Arsindu**: These two fortified cities of Ata, with 10 satellite villages, as well as the fortress of **Mesu** are likely to be sought somewhere in the southern part of Azmar Dagh. They seem to have comprised a comparatively small polity.

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[32] See Nishiyama 2020.

[33] Note that the entire account dealing with Ammali, Hudun, and Kiṣirtu is concluded with the passage: "Moving from among the cities of Araštua" (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 54–60: TA ŠÀ URU.DIDLI *ša* $^{\mathrm{PN}}$*ar-áš-tu-a at-tu-muš*).

4. Shalmaneser III’s campaigns to Zamua / Mazamua

Ashurnasirpal II apparently established the permanent Assyrian presence over the land of Zamua, while maintaining the two Assyrian cities of Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat (locally known as Arrakdi) and Dūr-Aššur (locally known as Atlila) in the region. The vassal duty of regular tribute payment and corvée work was probably imposed on the entire land of Zamua, as mentioned in the annals’ account of the third Zamua campaign,[34] although some resistance might have taken place later. The inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (r. 858–824 BCE), the son and successor of Ashurnasirpal II, record two campaigns to and through Zamua / Mazamua, undertaken in his 4th and 16th years (855 and 843 BCE).

The earliest and presumably most reliable account of the first campaign is that of the so-called Kurkh Monolith. It reads as follows:

> “I marched to the land of **Mazamua**. I entered the pass of the land **Bunais** (and) approached the cities of ***Nikdeme*** and ***Nikdera***. They became frightened in the face of the flash of my mighty weapons and my tumultuous onslaught and they swarmed into reed boats on the sea. I went after them in rafts (made of inflated) goatskins (and) waged a mighty battle in the midst of the sea. I defeated them (and) dyed the sea red like red wool with their blood.”[35]

This account is notably short, taking up only six lines in the lengthy military account of a total of 134 lines for the campaigns from the accession year up to the king’s sixth year. Therefore, one may get the impression that the campaign was relatively minor, in spite of its dramatized end with a battle “in the sea.”

The account of the 16 Year Annals, compiled ten years later, deals with the same incident, stating: “I moved out from Inner City (Assur), crossed **Mount Kullar**, (and) went down to the land of **Inner Zamua** (*māt Zamua ša bītāni*) and conquered the cities of ***Nikdera***, of the land of Ida (*alāni ša* $^{\mathrm{PN}}$*Nikdera* KUR.*i-da-a-a*).”[36] While it does not mention the other leader Nikdeme, it reveals the origin of Nikdera as “Idaean.” The fact that the cities of Nikdera and Nikdeme are not specifically named in any of Shalmaneser III’s inscriptions implies that their cities were minor and that the military operation was not of a large scale.[37] This understanding is, of course, in concord with the already mentioned briefness of the campaign accounts in the Kurkh Monolith and the 16 Year Annals.

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[34] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 77–80: *šarrāni ša māt Zamua ana sihirtišunu ištu pān namurrat kakkīya šurbât bēlūtiya ēdurma šēpēya iṣbutū biltu maddattu kaspu hurāṣu annaku siparru diqārī siparri lubulti birme sisî alpī immerī karānu eli pān ušātir elīšunu aškun kadurrašunu ina Kalhi īpuš* “All the kings of the land Zamua took fright before the brilliance of my weapons and the greatness of my lordship and they submitted to me. I imposed upon them more tribute and tax than ever before – silver, gold, tin, bronze, bronze casseroles, garments with multi-colored trim, horses, oxen, sheep, (and) wine. They performed their corvée work in Kalhu.”

[35] RIMA 3 A.0.102.2: ii 75–78: *ana* KUR.*ma-za-mu-a allik ina nērebi ša* KUR.*Bunais lū ērub ana alāni ša* $^{\mathrm{PN}}$*nik-de-me* $^{\mathrm{PN}}$*nik-de-e-ra aqṭirib ištu pān namurrat kakkīya dannūti u tāhāziya šitmuri iplahūma ina eleppāti urbate ana tâmdi ittabkū eleppāti dušê warkišunu lū aṣbat tāhāzu dannu ina qereb tâmdi lū ēpuš dabdâšunu lū aškun tâmdi*(sic) *ina dāmišunu kīma napāsi lū aṣrup.*

[36] RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: ii 10–15.

"The land of Ida" is, in all probability, to be equated with the land of the city Idu, identified with the modern site of Satu Qala located on the right bank of the Lower Zab, 18 km east of Taqtaq. The inscriptions and archaeological remains found at Satu Qala in the excavations from 2010 to 2013,[38] as well as several other Assyrian documentary sources, royal inscriptions, and administrative texts, have revealed valuable pieces of information regarding the history of the site. It was once the capital of the Middle Assyrian border province of Idu,[39] before the Assyrian state lost control over the region to local kings who ruled it during most of the 11th–10th centuries BCE.[40] Then, as the royal inscription of Adad-nerari II shows,[41] Assyrians retook Idu as well as the nearby city of Zaqqu, and the Assyrian occupation of Idu continued as indicated by Assyrian archaeological remains from the site, including a glazed decorative plaque bearing the text: "Palace of Ashurnasir[pal (II) …]."[42] Regarding the identification of Nikdera's Ida with Idu (modern Satu Qala), one may assume, with Christian W. Hess,[43] that Nikdera represents the fugitive remnants of the local dynasty of Idu. Shalmaneser III's texts lead us to believe that Nikdera and Nikdeme had to flee from Idu and its vicinity and thereupon took up residence in Inner Zamua.[44]

Comparing the different versions of Shalmaneser III's annals (discussed above, §4), one may believe that "the land of Mazamua" (KUR.*ma-za-mu-a*) of the Kurkh Monolith is basically identical with "the land of Inner Zamua" (KUR.*za-mu-a ša bētāni*) of later versions; similarly, the pass of Bunais mentioned in the former should be equated with the crossing point of Mount Kullar in the latter.[45] Zamua and Mazamua are apparently variant appellations of one and the same country (see below, §5). The expression "Inner Zamua" (*Zamua ša bītāni*), however, appears to indicate a part of Zamua that is "inside" the mountainous land and far from Assyrian view, rather than simply emphasizing the remoteness of Zamua as a backcountry based on the Assyrian viewpoint.

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[37] The Zamua campaign of Shalmaneser III's fourth year is also described in his other inscriptions: RIMA 3 A.0.102.8: ll. 8´–11´; A.0.102.10: ii 6–9; A.0.102.14: ll. 50–52; A.0.102.16: ll. 24–26 (cf. Yamada 2000b); A.0.102.28: ll. 42–44; A.0.102.29: ll. 39–40. Most of these accounts are as short as that of the 16 Year Annals, or even shorter. An exception is a passage in the summary-type inscription found on the throne base (RIMA 3 A.0.102.28: ll. 42–44), which is longer and uniquely mentions Anarê of Bunisu ($^{\text{PN}}$*a-na-re-e* KUR.*bu-ni-sa-a-a*) and Nikdera of Ida ($^{\text{PN}}$*ni-ik-di-a-ra* KUR.*i-da-a-a*) together, telling that the king pursued them up to a mountain and then the remnant of their army fled to a body of water. Anarê of Bunisu is attested only here, and not in any other inscriptions. The land of Bunisu is apparently equated with that of Bunais mentioned in the Kurkh Monolith, and also with the city of Bunasi / Bunisu / Bunais, one of the cities near Mount Nimuš (Pir-a Magrun) mentioned in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal II (see above, §2). Taking into account the rough composition of the throne base inscription, one can assume that Anarê of Bunisu was actually defeated on the way to reach the base(s) of Nikdera in Inner Zamua.

[38] van Soldt et al. 2013; Pappi 2016.

[39] van Soldt 2008.

[40] Pappi 2016.

[41] RIMA 1 A.0.99.2: l. 34.

[42] SQ 11-T14; van Soldt in van Soldt et al. 2013: 213-214: É.GAL $^{\text{PN}}$*aš-šur*-PAP-[…].

[43] Hess in van Soldt et al. 2013: 220.

[44] An alternative, but less likely, scenario is that they had kept their cities on the bank of Lower Zab between Assyria and Zamua, as assumed by Pappi 2018: 118. The region had probably been incorporated into an Assyrian province, either Arba'il or Arzuhina, at the time of Niqdera.

[45] Levine 1973: 17-19.

The land of Bunais apparently comprises the city of Bunasi (variant spellings: Bunisu, Bunaisu), which is mentioned in Ashurnasirpal II's texts as one of the cities located at the foot of Mount Nimuš (Pir-a Magrun; see above, §2.2). Levine believed that the pass of Bunais is an alternative name of the pass of Babitu, and the passes of Mount Kullar, Banais, and Babitu are all the same and identified with the modern Bazian Pass, the major pass to reach Zamua by crossing the Bazian ranges. However, I am inclined to assume that Mount Kullar was not in the Bazian range but a part of Azmar Dagh, east to Sulaymaniyah, and that the pass of Bunais was a crossing of that mountain ridge just to enter the "inner" part of Zamua, where the "cities" of Nikdera and Nikmede were situated; their residents might have been located along the stream of Aw-e Gogasur on the way to the "sea," which is identified with Lake Zeribor.[46] In this connection, the account of Sargon II's (r. 721–705 BCE) eighth campaign mentions that the king crossed the "Lower Zab" (ÍD.*za-ban* KI.TA-*ú*), and "entered the pass of Mount Kullar, the steep mountain of the land of Lullumī that they call the land of Zamua."[47] This statement suggests that Mount Kullar is steep and likely located inside the land of Zamua; this does not seem to match well with the gentle route through the Bazian pass located at the entrance to Zamua.

The second campaign of Shalmaneser III in his 16th year (843 BCE) was conducted in more distant lands, passing through the now firmly controlled Zamua, as described in his annals. The earliest and most reliable account was composed just after Shalmaneser III's campaign of his 16th year (843 BCE) and reads:[48]

> "In my 16th *palû*, I moved out from Arbail, crossed Mount Kullar, (and) established a fortress in Inner Zamua (*ina* KUR.*za-mu-a ša bītāni birtu aṣṣabat*). I conquered from the Inner Zamua to the land Munna (and) from the land Munna to the land Allabria, the city Paddira, the fortified city of Ianzibugaš, the Allabriaean …"[49]

Then, the text briefly tells that the king "destroyed like fire" (*kīma* ᵈ*Girru aqmu*) the farther Zagros countries of Parsua, Abdadani, and Habban.[50] The account proves that the Assyrian control of Zamua was already established at that time to allow the army to advance further ahead to the more remote lands deep within the Zagros. One should assume that the newly constructed fortress (*birtu*) was located close to the exit of the land of Zamua, and that the expression "Inner Zamua" (*Zamua ša bītāni*) was intended for this region deep inside the mountainous lands.[51]

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[46] For the identification of the "Sea (of Inner Zamua)" with Lake Zeribor, see Speiser 1928: 19; Levine 1973: 20-21; Parpola and Porter 2001: map 11; cf. K. Yamada 2005: 43, 49 n. 59; Radner et al. 2020: 84. The alternative suggestion of its equation with Lake Urmia was convincingly dismissed by Levine 1973: 20-21 (but note that Medbedskaya 2000 still insists on the Urmia identification). Note also the recently published limestone block in the Archaeological Museum of Sanandaj, which once was part of the top half of a rock relief with an Assyrian king's image and which Radner et al. 2020: 91-92 assigned to Shalmaneser III on stylistic grounds, that was found not far from Lake Zeribor on the eastern face of the Hewrāmān mountain range, which may further support the identification of the "Sea of Inner Zamua" with Lake Zeribor.

[47] Letter to Aššur: ll. 10–11: *nērebi ša* KUR.*Kullar šadî zaqri ša* KUR.*Lullumī ša* KUR.*Zamua iqabbûšūni*; edition: Mayer 2013; RINAP 2: Sargon II, no. 65.

[48] Later versions of this campaign account, shorter or fragmentary, are found in: RIMA 3 A.0.102.10: iii 33–37; A.0.102.13: ll. 2´–4´; A.0.102.14: ll. 93–95; A.0.102.16: ll. 102´ (?)–115´; A.0.102.38: ll. 10´–13´.

[49] RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: iii 58–iv 2.

[50] RIMA 3 A.0.102.6: iv 3–6. All the toponyms are accompanied by the city determinative URU, but the parallel account of the 20 Year Annals (RIMA 3 A.0.102.10: iii 33–37) properly gives the land determinative KUR for all of them, including two additional land names: Namri and Tugliaš.

[51] Levine 1989: 88.

Šamši-Adad V (r. 823–811 BCE), the successor of Shalmaneser III, states in his inscriptions that he also crossed Mount Kullar to reach the land of Na'iri[52] in his "third campaign" (*ina* 3 *ger-ri-ia*), which is probably dated to his sixth year (818 BCE);[53] he received tribute from Dadi of Hubuškia, Šarṣina, son of Meqdiara of Sunbi,[54] Manneans, Parsuaeans, and Taurlaeans; he defeated and conquered the land of Gizilbunda, and further marched to the land of the Medes.[55] At the end of this campaign account, it is told also that "at that time, I thundered like the god Adad, the thunderer, from Mount Kullar, the mighty mountain, to the sea of the sunset[56] and spread the terror of radiance upon them."[57] Šamši-Adad V apparently passed through the land of Zamua, without encountering any obstacles, to reach the military targets of that year located to the east of Zamua, so that Zamua was, in all probability, already placed under Assyrian provincial control. Again, Mount Kullar is described here as the exit to those Zagros countries, which fits the Azmar Dagh better than the Bazian range.

5. The annexation of Zamua / Mazamua as an Assyrian province

The earliest provincial governor of Zamua / Mazamua known so far is Bēl-qāte-ṣabat, the eponym of 810 BCE (= year 1 of Adad-nerari III, r. 810–783 BCE). After him, the governors of the province are continuously attested in texts from the reigns of Aššur-dan III (r. 772‒755 BCE), Tiglath-pileser III (r. 744‒727 BCE), Sargon II (r. 721‒705 BCE), and Ashurbanipal (r. 668‒631 BCE; see Table 1). The provincial governors of Zamua / Mazamua from earlier dates, however, may possibly be concealed behind the eponyms whose office remains unknown or simply not attested in the surviving sources. This is perhaps also the case of later provincial governors, some of whom must have remained unknown only due to our present lack of information.

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[52] The toponym Na'iri was normally intended for mountain regions in northern Mesopotamia, especially the area to the north of the Tur Abdin; however, it is exceptionally used in this context for the Zagros countries east of Zamua and north-west of the land of the Medes. For the toponym Na'iri, see Bagg 2017: 444-445.

[53] The dating is assumed in comparison with the annals and Eponym Chronicles; see Reade 1978: 257-259.

[54] The land of Sunbi is apparently identical with Sumbi, which is mentioned in Tiglath-pileser III's stele from Iran as the city "on the border of the land of Assur," where Iranzu of Mannea arrived with his tribute (RINAP 1: no. 35: i 17´–20´: URU.*su*-⸢*um-bi*⸣ [*i-te*]-⸢*e*⸣ KUR-*aš-šur*.KI) and as "the area of Assyrian encampment," where Sargon II's eighth campaign started (Letter to Aššur: l. 12: KUR.*su-um-bi nagî piqitti ummāniya*; editions: Mayer 2013; RINAP 2: no. 65). As noted by Radner et al. 2020: 90, the parallel passage of Tiglath-pileser III's annals inscribed on a stone panel of his palace in Khorsabad (RINAP 1: no. 47: obv. 40) gives the name of the city as Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra instead of Sumbi, so that the former must be considered to be the newly given ceremonial Assyrian name of the latter.

[55] RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: ii 34–iii 27.

[56] "The sea of the sunset" (*tâmdi ša šulme* ^{d}*Šamši*) in this context is odd. Since the same name of a sea appears also in the account of the previous (second) campaign against the land Na'iri (RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: ii 21–22), it is hard to consider it as a scribal error. According to the context, it has been suggested that it be identified with either Lake Urmia or the Caspian Sea. The latter choice is based on the perception that the Caspian Sea was an extension of the well-known "sea of the sunset," which is the Mediterranean Sea: Reade 1995: 38-39. For discussion, see also K. Yamada 2005: 38 (with previous bibliography).

[57] RIMA 3 A.0.103.1: iii 67–70: *ina ūmēšu iš*<*tu*> KUR.*Kullar šadê danni ana tâmdi ša šulme* ^{d}*Šamši kīma* ^{d}*Adad šāgimi elīšunu ašgum pulhi melammē elīšunu atbuk*.

Table 1. Known governors of the Assyrian province of Zamua / Mazamua.

Governor	**Date attested**	**Attestations**
Bēl-qāte-ṣabat	810 BCE (= Adad-nerari III's year 1)[58]	Millard 1994: B1: l. 8: [*ša* URU.*m*]*a-za-mu-a*[59]
Ninurta-nāṣir	783 BCE (= Adad-nerari III's year 28)	Millard 1994: B1: l. 36´: [*ša* URU.*ma-z*]*a-mu-a*; B2: l. 31´: *ša* [URU.*za-m*]*u-a*; B10: r. 23: L[Ú].⸢GAR.KUR⸣ UR[U.*za-mu*]-*u*$^{!}$-*a*
Aplāyu	768 BCE (= Aššur-dan III's year 4)	Millard 1994: B1: l. 51´: *ša* [URU.*ma*]-*za-mu-a*; B2: l. 46´: *ša* URU.⸢*za-mu-a*⸣; B10: r. 40: [ ]-*a*; Andrae 1913: no. 34 (see Finkel and Reade 1998): *ṣa-lam* $^{\mathrm{m}}$A-*a* LÚ.*šá-kin* / KUR.*za-mu-u*$^{!}$-*a* / URU.*a*-⸢*rak*⸣-*di* / URU.[BÀD]-AŠ
Anonymous	738 BCE (= Tiglath-pileser III's year 7 = *palû* 8)	RINAP 1: no. 13: l. 18: LÚ.GAR.KUR KUR.*lul-lu-mi-i*
Aššur-da''innanni	733 BCE (= Tiglath-pileser III's year 12 = *palû* 13)	Millard 1994: B1: l. 90´: *ša* URU.*ma-za-mu-a*; also RINAP 1: no. 41: l. 13´; no. 47: obv. 42.
Šarru-ēmuranni	712 BCE (= Sargon II's year 10)	Millard 1994: A9: KUR.*za-mu-a*; cf. the letters by or assigned to him in SAA 5: nos. 199-209 and the colophon Hunger 1968: no. 294U: […] GAR.KUR KUR.*lul-lu-mi-e*
Adad-issiya	c. 711–705 BC (reign of Sargon II)	SAA 11: no. 18: ll. 6–7: $^{\mathrm{PNd}}$IM-KI-[*ia* 0$^{?}$] / [URU.D]U$_{6}$-*bar-sa-ip* KUR.*za-m*[*u-a*]; cf. the letters by or assigned to him in SAA 5: nos. 215–225
Nūrāya	c. 650 BCE (reign of Ashurbanipal, during Šamaš-šumu-ukin's revolt)[60]	ABL 754 + CT 54, 250: l. 12: $^{\mathrm{PN}}$ZALÁG-*a*-[*a*] LÚ.EN.NAM *šá* KUR.*za-me-e*
Šarru-mētu-uballiṭ	post-canonical eponym date, i.e. after 648 BCE: perhaps 642 BCE[61] or 640 BCE[62]	Donbaz and Parpola 2001: no. 135: s. 3–4: [*lim-m*]*e* $^{\mathrm{PN}}$LUGAL-ÚŠ-TI.LA / [ ] *ša* KUR *za-mu-u*

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[58] Radner 2017b: 212: "Šamši-Adad V's governor of Mazamua" is a slip, as the eponym year of Bēl-qāte-ṣabat was the first year of Adad-nerari III, although his nomination was decided, in all likelihood, during the reign of Šamši-Adad V, before Adad-nerari III's accession. For the method used for the determination of eponym holders, see most recently Yamada 2018: esp. 82-84.

[59] The restorations of lines in the Eponym Chronicles (Millard 1994: B1, B2 and B10) are based on the hand copies and by postulating that manuscript B1 has consistently URU.*ma-za-mu-a*, as given in l. 90´ (733 BCE), that manuscript B2 has URU.*za-mu-a*, as in l. 46´ (768 BCE), and that manuscript B10 has URU.*za-mu-ú-a*, as in r. 23 (783 BCE).

Karen Radner assumed that the province of Zamua / Mazamua had been established by the second Zamua campaign of Shalmaneser III in 843 BCE,[63] and this must be accepted as a *terminus ante quem*. In my view, however, the Assyrian provincial government may have already started during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. His annals and two other inscriptions include a notable passage in the summary of the king's conquests, placed just behind the yearly campaign accounts:

> "I counted (the people) from the pass of the city Babitu to Mount Hašmar as the people of my land. In the lands over which I gained dominion, I always appointed my governors. They entered (lit. performed) servitude (and) I imposed upon them corvée."[64]

The phrase "I counted from the pass of the city Babitu to Mount Hašmar as the people of my land" is applied to quite a specific area: "from the pass of the city Babitu to Mount Hašmar," and this is obviously related to the result of the king's consecutive campaigns crossing the Babitu Pass into the land of Zamua,[65] during which Arrakdi / Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat had already been an Assyrian city and Atlila / Dūr-Aššur was occupied and fortified as one. Thus, this specific note may point to the annexation of the area as a new province.[66] Some local people are said to have occasionally been taken as captives and probably transferred to the core area of Assyria or other places under Assyrian control.[67] It is plausible, however, that most local sheikhs and "city rulers" (*bēl-ālāni*), who accepted Assyrian suzerainty, could have maintained their leading status in their local society, and even within the sphere of the Assyrian province, since their elimination is not referred to in Assyrian inscriptions (see also below, §9).

Another question is where the capital of Zamua province was located. Emil Forrer suggested that Mazamua was the name of its capital city since it is attested on a few occasions with the city determinative URU,[68] whereas Zamua is surely the land name.[69] However, Zamua and Mazamua are both attested with the determinatives KUR and URU (mostly with KUR, rarely with URU).

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[60] Baker (ed.) 2001: 968 (Nūrāia or Nūr-Aia, 8); for the date, see Frame 1992: 180.

[61] So suggested by Reade 1998: 256.

[62] So suggested by Simo Parpola in Radner (ed.) 1998: xviii; cf. Baker (ed.) 2011: 1250.

[63] Radner 2006: 52 (842 to be corrected to 843 BCE).

[64] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: iii 124–125; A.0.101.3: ll. 44–45; A.0.101.23: l. 11 (Standard Inscription); A.0.101.26: ll. 29–30; A.0.101.33: l. 13´: *ištu* KUR.*nērebi ša* URU.*Babite adi* KUR.*Hašmar ana nišī mātiya amnu ina mātāti ša apēlušinani šaknūtiya altakan urdūti uppušū kudurru ēmissunūti*.

[65] RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 23–86.

[66] Forrer 1920, 43; followed by Liverani 1992: 45 and Lanfranchi 2003: 81. It should be noted, however, that the last part of the passage "In the lands over which I gained dominion I always appointed my governors" seems to be only a general statement applied to a number of territories integrated in various ways into the Assyrian administration, including provinces and outposts, as well as lands ruled by local dynasts regarded as Assyrian governors; thus, it cannot serve as direct evidence for the annexation of all the lands mentioned: Yamada 2000a: 303; cf. Sano 2015.

[67] Attested are the captives (*šallatu*) and 1,200 troops (*ummānātu*) from the cities of Uze, Berutu, and Lagalaga in Dagara (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 29–31); captives (*šallatu*) from Bunasi and the cities in the plain of Mount Nimuš (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 38 and 42), and the cities belonging to Larbusu, Dūr-Lullume, Binisu and Bāra (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 45); troops (*ummanātu*) and captives (*šallatu*) from Ammali (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 56).

[68] URU.*ma-za-mu-u-a* (SAA 11: no. 1: ii 4); URU.*ma-za-mu-a* (Millard 1994: 45, year 733 BCE, manuscript B1). However, also note URU.KUR.*za-mu-u* (SAA 7: no. 136: ii 7´).

[69] Forrer 1920: 43.

Thus, they are most probably only variant appellations of one and the same land.[70] The regional name is most frequently spelled as KUR.*za-mu-a*, with the variants KUR.*za-mu-u/ú*, and also spelled similarly in Babylonian texts, as KUR.*za-me/mé-e*.[71] Whatever its etymology is, if we accept the explanation given in the account of Sargon II's eighth campaign, namely "the land of Lullumī, which they call the land of Zamua,"[72] then Zamua / Zamû was the original land name used by the local people.

Mazamua, spelled mostly KUR.*ma-za-mu-a*, with the variants KUR.*ma-za-mu* and *ma-za-mu-a* (without the country determinative), is attested later than Zamua, only from the reign of Shalmaneser III onward; so this could be a secondary spelling.[73] One can assume that the name Mazamua derives from the habituated full pronunciation of "the land of Zamua" as *māt Zamua*, which may have been turned into Maz(z)amua, frequently being preceded by the pleonastic determinative of KUR.[74] Spellings such as URU.KUR.*za-mu-u*[75] and URU.*ma-za-mu-a*[76] can be interpreted as "the city of the land Zamua / Mazamua," intended to refer to the provincial capital of the land Zamua, if they are not just erroneous writings.

Turning back to the question of the provincial capital city, one can note that the Assur stele of Aplāyu, the governor of Zamua province and the eponym of the year 768 BCE (cf. Table 1), reads:

> "Image of Aplāyu, governor of Zamua, of the city of Arrakdi and of the city of Dūr-Aššur."[77]

One of the two cities mentioned, either Arrakdi / Tukulti-Aššur-aṣbat or Atlila / Dūr-Aššur (URU.BÀD-AŠ), must have been the capital of the province. If one attaches some importance to the order of reference, Arrakdi, the city occupied earlier (see above, §2.2), may have been a better candidate for the capital, at least at that time.

6. The enlargement of the Zamua province

The territory of the Zamua province was later enlarged. After mentioning Dūr-Aššur, the so-called Zamua Itinerary enumerates several place names within a three-day itinerary, including the fortresses or towns of Banbala, Birtu-ša-Gurrāya, Birtu-ša-Adad-rēmanni, and Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra, before the text becomes obscure.[78] Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra was apparently a fortress established by Tiglath-pileser III (r. 744–727 BCE), as its name implies. This fortress is mentioned in the version of his annals that was edited toward the end of his reign,[79] and also in the parallel account found in the earlier text on the Iran Stele, with its original local name, Sumbi,[80] as the place where Iranzu, the Mannean, came to pay his tribute.[81] Thus, as already mentioned (see above, §4), Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra is the newly given Assyrian name of Sumbi. Birtu-ša-Adad-rēmanni is mentioned on an epigraph of an Ashurbanipal relief as a Mannean place (re)conquered by Ashurbanipal.[82] It seems that these fortresses were annexed to Assyria by Tiglath-pileser III. Situating Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra close to Lake Zaribor, Levine assumed that this region was included in the territorial extent of Zamua.[83]

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[70] For attestations, see Radner 2017b, and add URU.*za-mu*(-*ú*)-*a* as attested in the Eponym Chronicles (see Table 1).

[71] For attestations, see Radner 2017b.

[72] Letter to Aššur, l. 11: KUR.*Lullumī ša* KUR.*Zamua iqabbûšūni*; edition: Mayer 2013; RINAP 2: no. 65.

[73] *Contra* Radner 2017b: 211, who argues that "the correct realization is Mazamua" on the basis of the spellings with initial *ma*-.

[74] See Levine 1973: 16 n. 53, discussing the possibility to read KUR.*Zamua* as *Matzamua*. Cf. also Postgate 2000: 89-90 reading KUR-Zamua as Mat-Zamua (SAA 5: no. 215: l. 5).

[75] SAA 7: no. 136: ii 7′.

[76] SAA 11: no. 1: ii 4; Millard 1994: 45, Year 733, manuscript B1.

[77] 1913: 46 no. 34: *ṣa-lam* $^{\mathrm{m}}$*A-a* LÚ.*šá-kin* ^{2} KUR.*za-mu-u*$^{!}$*-a* 3 URU.*a-*⌜*rak*⌝*-di* ^{4} URU.[BÀD]-AŠ; after the improved reading of Finkel and Reade 1998, which was accepted by Radner 2017b: 212-213.

[78] A toponym that appears after Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra is very fragmentary, though Parpola *apud* Levine 1989 suggested that it should be read as A.A[B$^{?}$.BA].MEŠ; note, however, the edition in SAA 11: no. 14, where no restoration is suggested at this point.

In connection with Birtu-ša-Adad-rēmanni, Karen Radner recently offered a new piece of evidence in the form of the fragment of an inscribed ceramic drinking bowl found in 2018 at Gird-i Rostam in the Penjwin district of Sulaymaniyah province, in whose fragmentary inscription Radner suggests restoring the toponym.[84] As fortification architecture was found at Gird-i Rostam, which might be linked to the Neo-Assyrian-period occupation of the site, Radner considers identifying that site with Birtu-ša-Adad-rēmanni and Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra/ Sumbi with the now badly destroyed settlement mound of Penjwin,[85] and this suggestion is possible. Furthermore, she proposed that those fortresses or cities were incorporated into the province of Parsua, which is known to have been annexed to the territorial holdings of the Assyrian Empire by Tiglath-pileser III in his second *palû*.[86] Accordingly, she located the land of Parsua directly in contact with Zamua, suggesting that Parsua stretched from the Penjwin and Marivan area in the west to Sanandaj in the east. I am still inclined to regard the Penjwin and Marivan region as an extended part of the Zamua province, the part called in Shalmaneser III's text "Inner Zamua," as I will discuss in the following.

Later, Sargon II repressed a series of revolts of the city Karalla, which was situated on the road to the major kingdom of Mannea, and annexed it to the Assyrian territories, as recorded in his inscriptions.[87] Aššur-lē'i, the leader of Karalla, was executed and the people were brought to Hamath in Syria after the first revolt (sixth *palû*, 716 BCE), and the city of Karalla was "added to the province of Lullumī."[88] Three years later (ninth *palû*, 713 BCE), according to Sargon's annals, Amitašši, brother of Aššur-lē'i, revolted again; however, the revolt was repressed and Karalla was reclaimed by the Assyrian Empire.[89] Lullumī is the archaic-literary appellation of Zamua, as explained in the account of Sargon II's eighth campaign (as already discussed above, §5), and governors of the province of Zamua are attested with this alternative name Lullumī in several texts.[90] Hence, Karalla was added to the province of Zamua / Lullumī at that time. The location of Karalla can safely be assumed to be in the vicinity of Tang-i Var, in the district of Sanandaj, about 50 km southwest of the modern city of Sanandaj, where Sargon II's rock inscription commemorating his victory over the rebellious Karalla was found, together with a relief of the king's image.[91] Tigalth-pileser III is known to have annexed the provinces of Parsua and Bit-Hamban (in the second *palû* = year 1) as well as some more distant Zagros countries.[92] Thus, it seems that Karalla, being located next to the Assyrian province of Zamua, still remained as an enclave of an independent client state until it would rebel and eventually be annexed by Sargon II.

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[79] RINAP 1: no. 47: l. 40.

[80] RINAP 1: no. 35: i 17′–20′.

[81] Levine 1989: 87 states "Dur-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra is the place where Tiglath-pileser III received the tribute of the Medes, Ellipi, and other unspecified mountain chieftains." However, the place for the reception of their tribute actually remains unclear in the vague narrative.

[82] Discussed by Reade 2001: 77 and Radner 2016: 19-20. The epigraph I R, 8, 1b reads: URU.HAL.ṢU $^{\text{PNd}}$IM-*rém-a-ni šá* KUR / *man-na-a-a* KUR-*ud áš-lu-*⸢*la*⸣ […].

[83] Levine 1989: 88.

[84] GiR 278688.10.5; see Radner in Potts et al. 2018–19: 108-111 and Radner et al. 2020: 90. Radner's full publication is forthcoming.

[85] Radner et al. 2020: 90.

[86] Radner et al. 2020: 91. RINAP 1: no. 35: i 9′–11′. Note also the badly worn fragment of a stele originating from Qal'eh-i Imam near Marivan on Lake Zeribor, which Radner el al. 2020: 88 attribute to Sargon II, suggesting that the passage on the fragment deals with the episode in which the people of Harhar turned to Daltâ to be their leader while disposing their city-lord Kibaba (cf. Fuchs 1994: Prunk. = RINAP 2: no. 7: ll. 70, 117). Radner argued that the Marivan region, where the stele was found, together with the Penjwin region, were located in the province of Parsua.

[87] For references, see Fuchs 1994: 442, s.v. Karalla, 6th and 9th *palû*; Levine 1972: 38-39 (Najafehabad Stele): ii 31–32; RINAP 2: 25-26 (Table 1), 532 (index s.v. Karalla).

[88] UGU *pi-*[*h*]*a-at* URU.*lu-lu-me ú-rad-di*; Levine 1972: 38-39 (Najafehabad Stele = RINAP 2: no. 117): ll. 31–32.

The cities and fortresses that are mentioned after Dūr-Aššur in the "Zamua Itinerary" were presumably located along a route somehow connecting the Shahrizor Plain and Tang-i Var. They were probably found in the Penjwin and Marivan areas (as Louis D. Levine and Karen Radner assumed)[93] or, less likely, on the route going through the Darband-i Khan area along the Sirwan River, the eastern tributary of the Diyala, one of whose branches also reached Karalla. In any case, taking into account the fact that the Zamua province was extended to include Karalla (near modern Tang-i Var), it seems to me that the Penjwin and Marivan areas, which were probably regarded as part of "Inner Zamua" and included the "Sea of Zamua" (Lake Zeribor), would have also been incorporated into the province of Zamua by Tiglath-pileser III. Accordingly, I maintain the view that Parsua was located to the east of Karalla, in the area between Sanandaj in the north and Mahdasht in the south.[94]

Several letters from Zamua and its vicinity, known from the time of Sargon II,[95] give information regarding the situation in and around the province of Zamua in this general period, referring to the military organization, including the maintenance and construction of forts, the diplomatic relations with nearby lands, such as Arrapha, Sumbi, Allabria, Karalla, Andia, Mannea, and Bit-Hamban, as well as the trade and transaction of horses, wine, and metal objects, building works, and cultivation of grain. However, from that time onwards, the eastern border of the enlarged extension of the Zamua province was not always secure.

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[89] Fuchs 1998: 37–38: Nineveh Prism: v 27–30 (= RINAP 2: no. 82); cf. Fuchs 1994: Ann. 165–170 (= RINAP 2: no. 1).

[90] GAR.KUR KUR.*lul-lu-mi-i/e* in a colophon (Hunger 1968: no. 294U; cf. Millard 1994: 120 s. v. Šarru-ēmuranni) and in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III (RINAP 1: no. 13: l. 18; here, in Tiglath-pileser III's eighth *palû* = 738 BCE, the governor of Lullumī/ē is said to have conquered the city of Mulugani, located behind the fortress of the Babylonians: URU.*mu-lu-ú-ga-ni* […] ⸢*ša*⸣ *ku-tal dan-ni-ti ša* DUMU KÁ.DINGIR.RA.KI).

[91] Frame 1999; RINAP 2: no. 116. As noted by Frame in RINAP 2, the Karalla campaign commemorated in the inscription was another, against the third Karalla rebellion, probably dated to 706 BCE (the 16th *palû*), the year for which Karalla is mentioned in Eponym Chronicle (Millard 1994: 48: manuscript B4: r. 21´). Afterward, the Assyrian grip over the Karalla region presumably weakened and was lost when the Manneans invaded Zamua province in the reigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal (see below in this section).

[92] RINAP 1: no. 17: ll. 5–7 (*palû* 9); no. 35: i 9–10; no. 39: l. 18; no. 41: l. 6´.

[93] Levine 1989; Radner et al. 2020.

[94] Levine 1974: 110; Reade 1995: 34-37; Fuchs in Fuchs and Parpola 2001: xxiv-xxv; Parpola and Porter 2001.

[95] SAA 5: nos. 199–226, as well as SAA 5: no. 227 from Arzuhina; SAA 15: nos. 74–75 from Karalla; SAA 15: no. 54 from Parsua, all referring to Zamua; see Fuchs in Fuchs and Parpola 2001: xxiv.

During the reigns of Esarhaddon (r. 680–669 BCE) and Ashurbanipal (r. 668–631 BCE), it was especially threatened by invasions from the Manneans, as implied by several queries to the sun-god Šamaš during the reign of Esarhaddon.[96] Some territories, including Birtu-ša-Adad-rēmanni as well as Sumbi / Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra, were lost,[97] and Ashurbanipal was forced to set out from Dūr-Aššur to fight against the Manneans and regain the lost territory, as shown by his royal inscriptions,[98] and by some queries to Šamaš.[99]

7. Zamua's changing demographic structures

Some demographic information about the land of Zamua can be glimpsed from the personal names attested in the Assyrian textual sources. Three of the four leaders mentioned in the annals of Ashurnasirpal II – Kirteara of the city Larbusa; Ameka of the city Zamru, called "the Zamuaean" (KUR.*za-mu-a-a*); and Araštua of the city Ammali – are probably of Iranian origin,[100] while the origin of the name of the fourth ruler – Muṣaṣina of the city Bunasi – is unclear.[101] The names of Nikdera and Nikdeme, as attested in Shalmaneser III's inscriptions, are of unknown origin;[102] nevertheless, the similarity of the former name with Kirteara might point to an Iranian linguistic connection. By contrast, Nūr-Adad, the "sheikh" (*nasīku*) of the land Dagara, and Zabīni of the city Kiṣirtu, as attested in Ashurnasirpal II's annals, have Semitic names; either both are Aramaic, or the former is Akkadian and the latter Aramaic.[103] The origin of the name of Ata of the city Arziza remains unclear.[104]

Thus, Iranian and Aramaean ethno-linguistic elements seem to have been mixed in this area by the ninth century BCE. Apparently, during the late second millennium BCE, Aramaeans infiltrated the region, which had originally been settled by the Lullu people (Lullub/mians, presumably composed of Iranian-Hurrian linguistic groups[105]), either migrating by their own motivation or else settling there in compliance with the desires of the Kassite-Babylonian state.[106] The Assyrian advance into the region from the ninth century BCE onward must have brought more Assyrians as well as other ethno-linguistic groups as deportees and workers into the region.

A significant occasion of mass immigration was when Tiglath-pileser III settled Aramaean deportees taken away from Babylonia in 745 BCE (= his first *palû* = year 0), as recorded in his annals.[107] According to them, a large number of Aramaean deportees from Babylonia were transferred to the northern border marches under the control of the Assyrian magnates – namely, the commander-in-chief (*turtānu*), the palace herald and chief cupbearer – as well as to the nearby provinces of Barhalzu and Zamua. The number of deportees is preserved for the provinces of the palace herald and Zamua, with 10,000 and 5,000 people, respectively. This mass deportation must have significantly changed the demographic balance in the Zamua province. The Assyrians and Aramaeans were presumably concentratedly settled in the Assyrian cities of Arrakdi and Dūr-Aššur, as well as other fortresses, such as Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra (see below, §9).

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[96] SAA 4: nos. 29–34, 267–269. See Starr 1990: lix-lx.

[97] See above, in the beginning of this section, for the loss of Birtu-ša-Adad-remanni, as suggested by the Ashurbanipal epigraph. Since that king departed from Dūr-Aššur, not from Sumbi / Dūr-Tukulti-apil-Ešarra located further east, as Sargon II did (see above, §4), the latter fortress had likely also been lost to or destroyed by the Manneans.

[98] RINAP 5/1: no. 3: iii 16–92; no. 4: iii 9–iii 15´; and *passim*.

[99] SAA 4: nos. 267–269.

[100] For Ameka, Araš-tua, and Kirtiara, see Radner (ed.) 1999: 100, 124; and Baker (ed.) 2000: 620.

[101] For Muṣaṣina, see Baker (ed.) 2001: 771.

[102] For Niqdēme and Niqdēra (Niqdiara), see Baker (ed.) 2001: 960.

[103] For Nūr-Adad and Zabīnu, see Baker (ed.) 2001: 967 (Akkadian), Baker (ed.) 2011: 1430 (Aramaic).

[104] For Ata, see Radner (ed.) 1998: 230.

[105] Klengel 1988. For the linguistic origins of the personal names and toponyms, see Zadok 2002: 92-95.

[106] For the Aramaean presence in the northern Zagros in the pertinent periods, see Marf 2019. The political influence of the Kassite Babylonia on the region is hinted by the note given in Ashurnasirpal II's annals (RIMA 2 A.0.101.1: ii 84–85) that Atlila / Dūr-Aššur had once been captured by the Babylonian king "Sibir," who is usually identified with Simbar-šipak who reigned c. 1025–1008 BCE: Brinkman 1968: 154 with n. 929.

The ethno-linguistic components of troops in the area of Assyrian control can perhaps be extrapolated in the composition of the armed forces of Zamua, as reported in one of the letters of Adad-issiya, an Assyrian official (probably the governor) of the Zamua province:[108] they were composed of 630 Assyrians (KUR.*aš-šur-a-a*), 360 Gurraeans (LÚ.*gur-ru*) and 440 Itu'aeans (LÚ.*i-*⌈*tú*⌉). Itu'aeans are a well-attested Aramaean tribal group that was often assigned military duty in the Assyrian army. The Gurraeans are also a tribal group, although their ethno-linguistic origin is in dispute: were they Aramaeans, Iranians, or something else; might they have included the local mountain people of Zamua?[109] In any case, the importance of Gurraean soldiers in the western Zagros is evident from the fact that the toponym [Birt]u-ša-Gurrāya is attested in the Zamua Itinerary, between Dūr-Aššur and Birtu-ša-Aššur-rēmanni.[110]

In this connection, it should also be noted that some West-Semitic personal names (Kablâ and Hazā) are attested in a fragmentary Neo-Assyrian contract dated to 725 BCE from Qalat-i Dinka in the Peshdar Plain, c. 70 km north of Sulaymaniyah.[111] This document likely reflects the newly created demographic circumstances after the mass immigration in the nearby province of the palace herald. This leads us to consider whether a similar situation, with an increase of Aramaean population groups, was also experienced in the province of Zamua. Another fragmentary Neo-Assyrian legal text from Tell Sitak, near Sulaymaniyah, features Assyrian names (Bīssunu, [Na]mārī, […]-mātu-taqqin, […]-lēšir, [Qāt]-Aššur-ṣabat), as well as one name that is apparently local ([Di]arāyu).[112] This may reflect the increase of people bearing Assyrian names in a town close to Arrakdi, a major city in the Zamua province.

8. An inscribed necklet from Yasin Tepe and its implications

In this section, I will discuss a new piece of evidence concerning the cultural influence of the Assyrians over the province of Zamua. It is an inscribed necklet found at Yasin Tepe in the Shahrizor Plain, the site where the excavations directed in 2016–2019 by Shin'ichi Nishiyama (Chubu University, Japan) revealed impressive remains from the Neo-Assyrian period in its lower town, including an elite residence with an undisturbed underground brick tomb.[113] The site must have been one of the major Assyrian bases in the province, possibly Dūr-Aššur (see above, §2).

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[107] RINAP 1: no. 5: l. 10.

[108] SAA 5: no. 215; analysed by Postgate 2000.

[109] The Gurraeans have often been regarded as an Aramaean tribe, but their ethnic origin remains unclear: Zadok 2013: 313-314. For the identity and military role of Itu'aeans and Gurraeans, see the study of Luukko 2019 (with references to previous literature).

[110] 4675+; editions: Levine 1989; SAA 11: no. 14: r. 10–11: HAL.ṢU *ša gur-ra-a-a*.

[111] Radner 2015; 2016: 15-19.

[112] Radner 2017a.

The bronze necklet was found in the summer of 2017, in a reception suite of an elite residence, and its inscription was identified after the object was cleaned in the laboratory of the Slemani Museum in the summer of 2018.[114] On the side that also shows incised depictions of the divine emblems of stylus and spade, representing the gods Nabû and Marduk, the necklet bears two lines of cuneiform inscription, reading as follows:

> [1] *ana* ^{d}PA EN GAL UMUN-*šú* ^{m}DINGIR-SUM$^{!}$ DUMU$^{!}$ ^{PN}*gu-ri-i* DUMU-*šú iš-ruk*
> [2] *man-nu šá muh-hu i-šal*(*a*)*-ṭu* ^{d}PA *lu* EN *de-e-i-šú*

> "For Nabû, great lord, his lord, Ilu-iddina son of Gurî dedicated his son.
> [2] Anyone who claims authority to dispose (of the son), may Nabû be his legal adversary."

Another necklet with a similar text dealing with the dedication of a son by his father was found in Sam'al (modern Zincirli) in southeastern Turkey.[115] It bears an inscription with very similar content in Babylonian cuneiform script and probably dates to the eighth to sixth centuries BCE.[116] The inscription reads:

> *ana* ^{d}PA UMUN-*šú* ^{m}ŠEŠ-*li* A ^{m}*šá*-^{d}PA-*šú-u* A-*šú ana* TIN ŠI.ME-*šú* (*balāti napātišu*) RU (*išruk*) *ša ana muh-hi i-šal-laṭ* ^{d}PA ZÁH-*šú liq-bi*

> "To Nabû, his lord, Ahi-ili son of Ša-Nabû-šu dedicated his son for his life. (Anyone) who claims authority to dispose (of the son), may Nabû order his elimination."

A further comparable example is a rectangular bronze plaque (11.3 × 7.7 cm) in the so-called "amulet" shape; the provenance is unknown but it is probably from Kalhu.[117] It records the dedication of a house in Kalhu, as well as estates in villages and people of various occupations, to the god Nabû, opening with a phrase similar to that of the Yasin Tepe necklet:

> *a-na* ^{d}PA EN GAL-*e* ⸢UMUN⸣-*šú* PN *a-na* TI.LA ZI.MEŠ-*šú* GÍD UD.ME-*šú* […]

> "To Nabû, great lord, his lord, PN [has dedicated] for his life and the prolongation of his days."

The plaque bears the depictions of four anthropomorphic deities, with the two standing on dragon-based animal hybrids probably representing the gods Nabû and Marduk, as J. N. Postgate suggested.

Each of the three objects, the two necklets from Yasin Tepe and Zincirli and the bronze plaque, probably represent the short display version of a formal legal document, sealed and bearing the names of witnesses.[118] One may speculate whether the necklets from Yasin Tepe and Zincirli were attached to the boy in question during his dedication to the temple of Nabû. In any case, the Yasin Tepe necklet most likely belonged to a temple in the city.

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[113] As discussed by Nishiyama 2020.

[114] Nishiyama 2020: 60, fig. 8b. A joint paper by Nishiyama and Yamada with the full publication of the necklet and its inscription is forthcoming.

[115] S 3672: Andrae 1943: 96-97, pl. 44ak; Wartke 2005: 83 fig. 89.

[116] Andrae 1943: 96-97: "7, ja lieber noch 6. Jahrhundert"; Wartke 2005: 83: "8./7. Jh. v. Chr."

[117] BM 118796: Postgate 1987: 57-63.

The fact that the Mesopotamian god Nabû is attested as the recipient of a child, as documented by the necklets from Yasin Tepe and Zincirli, encourages us to consider the close religious cultural relations between the centre and peripheries of the extensive Assyrian Empire. The cult of Nabû spread from Babylonia during the Kassite period and was likely introduced to the city of Assur in the Middle Assyrian period.[119] From the ninth century BCE on, Assyrian kings built temples of Nabû in the new capitals of Kalhu, Nineveh, and Dur-Šarrukin, and continued to be patrons of Nabû sanctuaries in both Assyria and Babylonia.[120] Thus, one can assume that the popularity of Nabû may have further spread with the advancing frontiers of the Assyrian Empire and in this way came to reach the city of Yasin Tepe when the Assyrians occupied the land of Zamua.

A further possible point concerning Assyrian cultural influence is the Akkadian name Ilu-iddina of the man dedicating his son, according to the Yasin Tepe necklet, and the fact that his father had the West-Semitic (likely Aramaic) name Gurî.[121] Perhaps this represents the process of Assyrianization experienced by a West-Semite or Aramaean family in the Zamua province. While it can of course not be excluded that Gurî's family had already been settled for a long time in the region, the circumstances with the newly founded Assyrian city and the Aramaean deportees brought in masses into the region (see above, §7) raise the distinct possibility that Gurî was a deportee, or the descendant of a deportee, and that as a result of his cultural Assyrianization, he gave an Assyrian name to his new-born son and dedicated him to a god favoured by the Assyrians.

9. Concluding remarks: Assyrian influence and local traditions

The land of Zamua was originally composed of a number of small polities represented by city-rulers or sheikhs who sometimes were allied with each other, as seen in Ashurnasirpal II's inscriptions.

In the course of the Assyrian annexation of the region as a province, thousands of local troops and people were brought to the Assyrian core area and possibly to other cities in the Assyrian Empire, and a large number of Assyrians and Aramaeans were brought into the region, significantly changing the local demographic balance. Undoubtedly, the Zamua region was firmly kept under Assyrian provincial control from the ninth century BCE onward. The province served as base for the further expansion of the Assyrian Empire into the eastern reaches of the Zagros, and also sent its troops, alongside those of Arappha and Lahiru, to the southern Babylonian front during Ashurbanipal's war against his brother Šamaš-šumu-ukin.[122]

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[118] Another comparable object is a bronze circlet from Tell en-Naṣbeh, northwest of Jerusalem, that bears part of a one-line cuneiform inscription dealing with the dedication of a son to a god whose name is unfortunately lost: Vanderhooft and Horowitz 2002. I thank Shuichi Hasegawa who brought this piece to my attention.

[119] Pomponio 1978: 61-75. It is noteworthy that the cult of Nabû is also known in Elam in the 13th century BCE, and that several personal names with Nabû as theophoric element are attested in documents from Nuzi, apparently in both instances under Babylonian cultural influence: Pomponio 1978: 55-58; 1998: 18. Furthermore, Nabû is known to have been worshipped in Ugarit, where some scribes called themselves servants of the god Nabû and the goddess Nisaba in colophons of Akkadian texts: Pomponio 1978: 9; 1998: 18; this, too, coincided with the diffusion of Babylonian traditions.

[120] For the increase of Nabû's popularity in the Assyrian core area in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Porter 1997 and Pomponio 1998: 16-24.

[121] The name Ilu-iddina (meaning "The god has given") is well-attested in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Baker (ed.) 2000: 529. The name Gurî is composed of the word *gūr* "young animal" and the first-person suffix *-ī*. With Gūrâ and Gūrîa, similar names are attested in the Neo-Assyrian textual sources, see Radner (ed.) 1999: 430-431.

The Zamua province existed probably until the collapse of the Assyrian Empire, as suggested by the continuous attestation of its provincial governors up to the end of Ashurbanipal's reign (cf. Table 1). The cultural-religious influence of Assyria was imposed thereon, particularly in the cities directly placed under Assyrian control. However, the traditional social-cultural order of local indigenous towns was probably kept to a degree, as suggested by the fact that a letter from Šarru-emuranni, the governor of Zamua during the reign of Sargon II, reports of some local city rulers (*bēl-ālāni*) raising unknown claims,[123] and by the fact that an exemplar of Esarhaddon's succession treaty was issued to Larkutla, city ruler (*bēl-āli*) of Zamua.[124] This strongly suggests that the local political system in the Zamua province was maintained in parallel with the cities and forts established and controlled directly by Assyrians. The local polities preserved the political and social autonomy while being bound by the loyalty oath pledging political dependency on Assyria and bearing the duty of paying tax and tribute as well as of supplying workers and soldiers to Assyria. Thus, in spite of its location relatively close to the core area of the Assyrian Empire, Zamua kept the fragmented character of the political-administrative system typical for the mountainous regions of the Zagros, which were split into a large number of small polities.[125]

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[122] ABL 543 = SAA 21: no. 23; ABL 1108 = SAA 21: no. 24; ABL 1244 = SAA 21: no. 25; ABL 754+CT 54, 250; CT 54, 8; see Frame 1992: 160; Radner 2006: 52.

[123] SAA 5: no. 203: r. 8: LÚ.EN.URU-*a-ni*.

[124] Watanabe 1987: 56: l. 3 = SAA 2: no. 6, manuscript a: l. 3: LÚ.EN.URU KUR.*za-mu-u-a*.

[125] For the nature of the political-administrative relations of Assyrian and the Zagros countries, see the discussions of Lanfranchi 2003 and Greco 2003.

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- Social studies, with an emphasis on rural communities, their organization and relationship to the central government; every day life and social systems.
- Publication of dissertations and other theses dealing with topics concerning these subjects.
- Publication of international and interdisciplinary conferences on topics concerning these subjects.

Manuscripts are to be submitted to the editor as word-documents, with figures as single jpg-documents with a resolution of at least 800 dpi. Languages: English, French, German (for other languages please contact the editor).

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